


Margaret Carnegie
Library



THE
BRONZE
TREASURY



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024



THE REUNION OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY

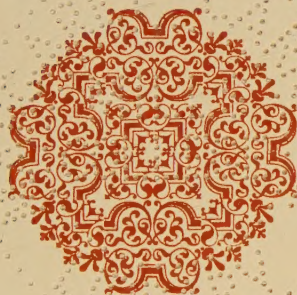
(From a drawing by William Blake)

THE BRONZE TREASURY

AN ANTHOLOGY OF 81 OBSCURE ENGLISH POETS

TOGETHER WITH THEIR BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS

Edited by Harry Kemp



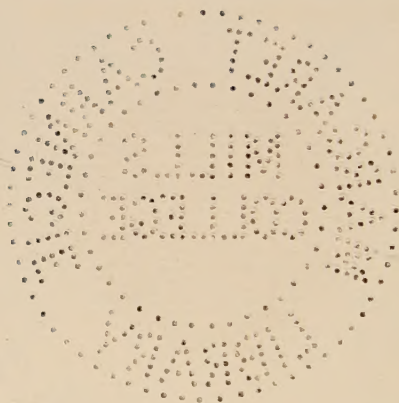
Mills College Library
Withdrawn

New York

THE MACAULAY COMPANY

1927

COPYRIGHT 1927
BY THE MACAULAY COMPANY



PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

821.08
K32b

54050

To
HORACE B. LIVERIGHT
in appreciation and friendship



POETS

A NEW voice, shrill and strange, lifting up into a feeble, sharp wail. A child has been born—one of the million others at the same moment—into a “world of trial and tribulation” as the waiting gossips will say.

This child of whom I write is born into a world of exceptional trial and tribulation; into a world of exceptional ecstasy as well, because he is destined to become that disturbing phenomenon, a poet!

Early set apart from the usual run of folk, he will see with other eyes, hear with other ears. He will know two worlds, instead of one, continually to cope with—the world of imagination; ill-paired with an iron world of irrefragable fact.

Gifted and troubled soul, he will end, oftener than not, by serving neither world well, himself more miserably than either.

Early the poet's father designs him for any one of the three conventional professions—Church, Law, or the practice of arms at sea or on land.

If of lowlier origin, he is destined for some useful trade, humbler calling.

He might become the man who preaches your sermons at you, clad in surplice and solemnity; he might go high in the learned and astute profession of the Law; he might command a ship or regiment—more likely trail a pike, a common soldier in the wars; run aloft as seaman. . . .

He might delve in your garden; stand behind your chair at table; curry and tend to your horses; till your fields; bake your bread; fashion your clothing. . . .

In whatever situation he finds himself—he will still be the poet, inhabiting his other world of dreams. . . .

Men make distinctions, while averring that God doesn't! It's certain that the Muses don't!

Born in any milieu, from labourer's cot to the great house where a hundred servants bustle obsequiously about—

He might be of premature birth: Keats and Smart were seven months' children. Haylay was born prematurely . . .

In such case the poet becomes a man of great delicacy of health, or of greater eccentricity of person.

In many instances the mother proves to be of stronger personality than the father . . . has a literary bent herself, an original and spirited outlook on life . . . it is the thwarted power in the mothers that goes into the mental stuff of the sons . . . dowering them with some of their unique qualities. The mothers often cast a mantle of protective belief in the genius of their sons—over the latter! The poets return this feeling in kind . . .

Soame Jenyns' mother is a celebrated "toast"; Keats' mother, a quick, dark, passionate woman who marries a doughty-bodied Kentish man that lives a calm life with horses—the owner of a livery stable . . . when she is lying on her deathbed, in the last stages of consumption, Keats, a mere child, parades outside her door, shouldering a very big sword, standing on infantine guard—in his mind the idea of keeping death away from her chamber; poor David Gray writes of his love for his mother "beyond conception of the vulgar"—and he addresses her, in a sonnet—

“—heart sore,
Weary with being weary,—weary purely,
In dying, mother, I can find no pleasure
Except in being near thee without measure.”

In the stress of difficult after-days, many wish to creep back to childhood, and to the protection of their mothers—back even to a womb of re-birth. . . .

Traherne's verses are pre-occupied with regret for the lost happiness of childhood; Vaughan and Wordsworth acclaim its vanished glory, faded forever from hill and dale, “into the light of common day.”

Fathers of poets:

The father of the Latin poet, Horace, is the classic example of paternal over-seeing of, and personal attendance to, a clever son's cultural up-bringing.

With the English poets, the fathers are not usually as sympathetic as the mothers—with a few notable exceptions:

There is, preëminently, the elder Bailey, who carefully fosters in the future author of “Festus” an exalted ideal of bardship stemming back to an earlier day, when the poet was “prophet and priest”—“leaving great verse unto a little clan”; there is the father of Beilby Proteus, who gives over into the hands of factors, all his Virginia properties, in order to accompany his brilliant son to England and there personally oversee his education; there is old labourer Gray, puzzled but proud, sadly exclaiming, in simple cottar heart-break “we are very weary, now David is gone”; and the blind Blacklock, goes into a greater night, when his father is killed by the falling-in of a malt-kiln . . . the Scotch, with their reverence for book-learning, present more fathers who sympathize with filial genius than the English.

Other influences that mould the poet—some village eccen-

tric—the Granny Bains who knows folksongs, in Clare’s case; the old people of a former generation that sit in chimney corners, and on benches in the sun, their imagination full of the glories of the past,—of ballads and songs of old; the companion who opens the way—Frogley, the studious brick-layer, in John Scott’s case; preceding poets and groups of poets: the Elizabethan dramatists, in Darley’s and Beddoes’ case; Keats is wakened to the office of poet by Chapman; the two Wartons and others, by Milton; Gascoigne owes a debt to Chaucer; Churchyard, to Skelton (I give instances at random); Rous, to Spenser; Dodsley and a whole generation, to Pope; Bailey and Pollok to Byron; Flatman to Cowley; Wade, to Shelley; Tennyson, to Keats. . . .

Bailey goes abroad for his primary inspiration for “Festus,” to Goethe, whom he has the conceit of having beaten. . . .

The poets of Italy, Spain, France—influence the generations of English singers. Their debt, and all poets’ debt, to the Latin and Greek Classics proves enormous.

Some begin writing when very young—in infancy almost: Blake, Cowley, Pope (the latter, to seem more of a prodigy than he had been, sets back the date of his earliest poem by several years—an ode. Swinburne pretends to have been younger, at the time of the publishing of his first book—than he was) . . .

Many write verse when young only, dying in youth: White, Pollok, Chatterton, Bruce, David Gray, and a multitude more:

Many, living on, give over the Muse for some more certain and thriving pursuit, or are abandoned by Her,—and, for the rest of their days, rather sadly, I opine, are doomed to “carry a dead poet about within them”—either leaving altogether the practice of poetry, or lugubriously toiling

over, and repolishing an earlier work that brought them fame; and leaving it, generally, the worse, instead of the better, for their maturer, less inspired tampering.

A few do not begin as poets (or say they do not), till thirty and perchance older: Edward Young is the one example I have in mind.

In spite of the contention of Mencken, and many other critics (who do not know what poetry is) that writing verse is the business of youth—the great poets compose with unflagging inspiration to the end: Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, Browning, Tennyson, Francis Thompson.

The great poet receives, and rightly deserves, the practical world's highest veneration and worship.

The rest—of whom this book is made up—deserve the world's sympathy and pity—that it seldomer gives than is good for it.

The poets' relations with their playmates and companions:

Have you ever seen a new-hatched chick with something bright caught about its leg? and watched the behaviour of the rest of the brood?—they peck and peck at the unique one till it perishes, unless rescued by a pitying hand.

Set a strange lad like Shelley, with his pale, floating hair and spectral eyes, down in the midst of the English, or any other conventional school system, and you can foresee what will eventuate without the foresight of a prophet:

Shelley, visioning gods and daemons, and the ultimate freedom of Man,—and already writing lurid romances after the manner of Monk Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe,—is goaded to desperation by the teasing and atrocious baiting of his fellow students; at one time he rushes among them with a penknife and stabs his worst tormenter in the hand, inflicting a slight flesh-wound; some poets are pugnacious

enough to fight their way to respect of their fellows: as Keats. . . .

Hartley Coleridge is wounded deeply by his schooldays. He is haunted, in after-life, by a recurring nightmare that leaves him in a sweat of fear—it is a nightmare of giant boys that cross his path, bully him, pelt at him with injurious missiles. . . .

Others get on better with their companions, sharing milder eccentricities: Dodsley, when in the hills on a day of declared holiday for the whole school's roaming afield, drops out from the ganging groups and reads from a book of verse behind a rock or under the shelter of some with-drawn tree.

Though many fall into scholarships, being poor—few win note as learned men: seldom does the man of creative imagination develop the patience for the necessary plodding and pedestrianism of that prolonged research that makes for erudition.

Instead, great readers and pasturers among the Classics; rather than great students, dreamy observers of life—they are happiest with a book, alone—solitary-seeming, but walking in the fine company of the folk of imagination that step out to them, from books.

Some few, agile-minded and clever in conversation, set up for wits, and are big at evenings of wine and talk; debate in coffee-houses: and in the freedom of inns and taverns. . . giving their companions an intellectual treat not too remote from easy qualities of gossip.

Such are well-liked. Often the wine gets the better of them, and they are sent away from the university to fare as they may: to thrive oftener less than more, under patrons that are gluttons for fulsome flattery.

Then there is London and Grub Street.

Frequently, they write hard things about their school days—when the rule of the ready rod, the harsh command of discipline, too readily took the place of patience. . . .

Later, in London, in the thick of the savage and merciless literary struggle, they look out over the twisted wilderness of chimney pots, from their attics, and their fancy goes back rather fondly to their schooldays, and, by contrast, they find a gleam of tender radiance lying there, that they had not perceived before.

School? and College?—there are fewer unlearned poets than is sentimentally supposed: Burns was no ignorant peasant; nor was Bloomfield; nor Hogg; no matter what conventional opportunities for education they lack, the most unschooled of the poets feed their minds upon great books, and seek learning whenever opportunity offers.

They have visions and dream dreams, these poets—the elder Coleridge lies on his back for hours, on the roof of a shed, when a boy—lost in a daze of meditation and fancy . . . others wander a-field brooding . . . “musing”—more aptly: Churchill, Shelley, Clare; Blake, a-field, talks with the spirit of Isaiah, on a hilltop; and, at the age of four, he cries out from alarm, seeing “God put his face up at a window”. His mother clouts him for this. Older, he claims mystically to have seen a tree blazing with the wings of angels and seraphim, instead of with the usual green foliage noted there by the unobservant and less acute eye. . . .

Looked askance at as crazed (several, in their mooning about, are suspected, by ignorant neighbours, of practicing the Black Art)—most, though extremely eccentric in conduct, are ever saner than the dull, banal-minded masses that so readily and emptily misunderstand them. . . .

To my mind, Blake's seeing trees golden-leaved with the plumes of seraphim is saner than the lumberman's or carpenter's sight, that sees there so many cords of firewood or planks to build a house with.

But by very token of this habit of mind that detects radiances where others do not find them, the poets often court disaster, and are defeated by an intolerable world of solid fact and heavy-handed use, where trees are, by common agreement, held to be composed solely of planks and cordwood. . . .

Fatally some poets seek refuge absolute in a dream-world of their own, and there abide in spirit, leaving their material bodies to move, foolish, half-automatons, in a scarcely heeded exterior world of solidities: there is Hartley Coleridge, with his dream-continent of Ejuxria; Claire, with his extraordinary fantasy of connubial felicity, in the Mad House . . . a fantasy in which he duplicates the actual processes of matrimony, even to the birth of a succession of dream-children whom he endows with names and all the actualities of daily existence.

There should be nothing more stimulating needed for the exercise of the poetic faculty than mere living in the midst of this bizarre and really absurd world, where motion flashes all about us with legs and wings; where horses and caravans and ships, where railroad trains and automobiles and motor cars go in extraordinary traffic . . . where great cities seethe . . . where music and beauty assail our every sense . . . where we live and love and toil and play and finally taste that strange change denominated "death"—dwelling meanwhile on a flickering mote falling forever through the stars. . . .

But in order to accommodate itself to this bizarrerie of material life, the human spirit cannot in sanity over-long

endure its lasting envisagement. Here custom and use come in lest the mind go mad. Even the poets must, in a measure, become creatures of use and wont . . . though, to continue poets, they must also never quite lose this Feel of alien wonder.

Here is where stimulants find their true function and office:

Though Blake and Shelley and a few like them, supreme ecstasists, still find their stimulus, their inspiration dangerously in this pristine imagination, this perpetual wonder and envisagement of life-strangeness—the majority of the poets require adjuvants to the Muse: the two greatest of which are Wine and Love.

Canary, sack, port, ale, brandy, whiskey; coffee, tea; tobacco; sometimes drugs: opium, laudanum—these stir the mind and aid the creative faculties:

Skelton, Prior, Thomas Warton have recourse to ale; canary and sack sustain the inspiration of the Elizabethans; Somerville is a good bottleman at port; Burns and Fergusson are set a-rhyming with whiskey; Akenside, Tickell, and the whole eighteenth century of songsters whet their wits on coffee, in the coffeehouses of the day; Wordsworth, despite his reputation for abstemiousness, drinks tea as strong as lye; Hartley Coleridge and John Clare imbibe brandy; Coleridge, Dowson, find release and fantastic stimulation in drugs; but where is the bard who finds inspiration in oat-meal water?

The poets are assailed for their wine drinking and their general "loose living": Bishop Sprat inveighs against them, in his tribute to Cowley:—

"Poets till now deserved excuse, not praise,
Till now the Muses lived in taverns, and the bays

That they were truly trees did show
Because by sucking liquor they did only grow——”

But I'd like to have the opportunity for observing to the good Bishop, were he near, with a mortal ear for hearing,—that it would have been a grand thing for English poetry, if the Elizabethan tavern-traditions had gone on through succeeding generations. . . .

For that good wine affords authentic inspiration for the poet is testified to by every singer from Homer and Hesiod, to most of the voices of the present.

The Poets and Love:

Here again is a situation in which the moralists differ with the facts of the case:

Few poets are monogamically inclined; few poets remain steadfast in their loves. Their imaginations will not let them. Every woman is a new country for them. It is Delia today, Sacharissa tomorrow.

The dream the poet holds, of perfection in women, the lure and exquisiteness of the new and strange, keep his fancy with wings expanded for further flight. And being rejected in love has inspired many a famous line . . .

Rochester, Byron, Burns are standard examples of roving inconstancy.

On the other hand, Tennyson is your faithful monogamist. And Blake, too,—though at one time he cherished, to his wife's perturbation, an amusing vagary of emulation of the Biblical patriarchs and their practice of taking unto themselves additional helpmeets.

Coventry Patmore is both singer and faithful practitioner of monogamy.

The prevalent attitude of poets toward women is one of misogyny, genuine, or affected for the sake of a clever turn of verse . . . "The inconstant Fair" is a constant epithet employed.

Because one woman, or two, exercises her feminine prerogative in not acceding to his advances, the poet "throws a hate" on a sex that constitutes quite a fraction more than half the whole human race.

It is evident from his verse, that because of one unhappy experience Owen Feltham writes his "Gunemastix."

And Akenside, for the same meager reason, joins the ranks of poet-misogynists, and sours into a permanent bachelorhood.

However, in misogyny, as in cynicism, you seldom come upon the mawkishness of the opposite extreme exemplified in Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Patmore . . . which poets impute to women an impossibly sexless and insipidly angelic nature that no age but the Victorian would have seriously considered—a feminine purity so ultra-pure that it grows obscene.

Running the gamut of their verse, we find scarcely a poet who honestly and simply accepts a woman as a fellow human being, in all ways like himself . . . though Walsh makes an attempt to sing love honestly, and Churchill's attitude is a fine, normal, manly one . . .

The condition of monogamy is seldom sung with a true ring of sincerity.

Dodsley, however, does so, in his humble wise; and Cotton, in his brief epitaph on the Mortons and their mutual death, and Henry King—to his deceased young wife—in a poem of singular sweetness and merit that will prevail against oblivion while the language lasts.

When the poets marry, the frightful struggle against poverty is intensified. What humiliations they endure! what siegeworks by duns! what threatened and actual imprisonment for debt! and how they supplicate the great and wealthy for patronage which is, when gained, frequently bitterer than their "crust of bread and liberty"! . . .

Housed in attics and poor cottages, sweating away at hack-work that booksellers demand—with wives, children and near-relatives to feed, clothe, maintain: it is usually no easy existence for the man who provides the songs that the world seems not to be able to do without and does not care to pay for.

If it is no easy life for the poet, it is less for the wife, the mistress.

Difficult enough it is to move daily in the presence of genius whose very artistic being depends upon the most delicate librations of mind and spirit . . . when, added to this, there comes an increasing progeny, the struggle for existence grows intolerable.

The practice of poetry, when successful is remunerative; that cannot be gainsaid. Pope becomes a wealthy man through his translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Churchill receives a thousand pounds for his *Rosciad*. Byron wakes to find himself not only famous, but in the way of a small fortune. Scott's popularity as a narrative poet transmutes into gold.

But the chances for fame and fortune are hardly greater than the luck of picking the right number at a national lottery.

The Poets' Deaths:—

Failing in their contention for the immortal laurel, or winning—poets, like the common run of men, must die.

Keats, Pollok, David Gray, Hoyland, Kirke White die of the "poet's disease," consumption.

Rochester and Dowson dissipate themselves to death; Chatterton, half-starved and immersed in black and dismal despair of failure, takes poison and is found dead, amid a roomful of torn manuscripts (the next day money coming in a letter); John Davidson, in his fifties, and in despair of a Government pension, drowns himself; Swift dies "at the top," and lingers out his last few years, a darkened hulk to whom rare periods of lucidity come; apoplexy takes Thomas Warton in his chair; Whitehead dies gently while leaning on the arm of a servant; Southwell suffers a glad death of martyrdom. . . .

Gout, heart-disease, dropsy—every mortal ill that assails and brings to final dissolution the frail flesh of man—in the midst of their dreams of immortal fame, these ills and diseases seize on the poets and bring them to their end—to lying beneath a quiet stone in some obscure churchyard—rarely in Westminster Abbey. They one by one join the oblivious tribes of mortality!

But wine will no more brighten the course of the blood, nor love trouble the heart, nor spring come again, when God shall smile above the death of his last, forgiven poet!



CONTENTS

JOHN SKELTON, 1460-1529	21
THOMAS CHURCHYARD, 1520-1604	25
THOMAS TUSSEER, 1524-1580	29
GEORGE GASCOIGNE, 1525-1577	34
JOHN HIGGINS, 1544-1605	42
ROBERT SOUTHWELL, 1561-1595	43
MICHAEL DRAYTON, 1563-1614	47
JOSEPH HALL, 1574-1656	52
FRANCIS ROUS, 1579-1658	55
JOHN TAYLOR, 1580-1654	61
SIR JOHN BEAUMONT, 1582-1628	67
LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY, 1583-1648	68
WILLIAM BROWNE, 1588-1643	73
HENRY KING, 1592-1669	82
JOHN DAY, 1574-1640	93
FRANCIS QUARLES, 1542-1644	94
SHAKERLEY MARMION, 1622-1639	107
OWEN FELTHAM, 1602-1677	118
EDMUND WALLER, 1605-1687	122
HENRY MORE, 1614-1687	127

PATRICK CAREY, 16th CENTURY	128
SIR JOHN DENHAM, 1615-1669	129
WILLIAM CHAMBERLAYNE, 1619-1689	133
JOHN HOSKINS AND WIFE	140
THOMAS FLATHAM, 1635-1688	142
THOMAS SPRAT, 1636-1713	147
JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER, 1647-1680	151
CHARLES MONTAGUE, 1661-1715	156
GEORGE STEPHNEY, 1663-1707	157
WILLIAM WALSH, 1663-1708	159
JOHN NORRIS, 1667-1711	162
THOMAS YALDEN, 1671-1736	164
WILLIAM SOMERVILLE, 1677-1742	166
JOHN BYROM, 1692-1763	172
ROBERT BLAIR, 1699-1746	175
ROBERT DODSLEY, 1703-1764	178
SOAME JENYNS, 1704-1787	184
STEPHEN DUCK, 1705-1756	194
SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1709-1784	199
FRANCIS HOYLAND, Circa 1735-	200
EDWARD LOVIBOND, -1775	204
WILLIAM SHENSTONE, 1714-1763	208
WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, 1714-1785	212
RICHARD JAGO, 1715-1781	218

NATHANIEL COTTON, 1721-1770	225
JOHN GILBERT COOPER, 1723-1769	230
MARK AKENSIDE, 1721-1770	233
THOMAS BLACKLOCK, 1721-1791	241
CHRISTOPHER SMART, 1722-1771	248
JOSEPH WARTON, 1722-1800	255
THOMAS WARTON, 1728-1790	260
JOHN SCOTT, 1730-1783	263
ERASMUS DARWIN, 1731-1802	265
BEILBY PORTEUS, 1731-1809	285
ANON. IN GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, JULY, 1731	287
WILLIAM FALCONER, Circa 1750	288
CHARLES CHURCHILL, 1731-1764	292
THOMAS PENROSE, 1743-1779	305
WILLIAM HAYLEY, 1745-1820	308
THOMAS DAY, 1746-1790	317
WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES, 1762-1850	324
JAMES HURDIS, 1763-1801	331
JOHN CLARE, 1793-1864	346
GEORGE DARLEY, 1795-1846	353
HARTLEY TAYLOR COLERIDGE, 1796-1848	361
ROBERT POLLOK, 1798-1827	370
THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES, 1803-1849	376
CHARLES JOHNSTON, -1823	382

THOMAS WADE, 1805-1895	383
FREDERICK TENNYSON, 1807-1895	389
CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER, 1808-1879	389
PHILIP JAMES BAILEY, 1816-1902	400
COVENTRY PATMORE, 1823-1896	419
SYDNEY DOBELL, 1824-1874	430
DAVID GRAY, 1838-1861	435
SELWYN IMAGE,	442
VICTOR PLARR,	444
THEOPHILE MARZIALS, 1850-	446
SIR LEWIS MORRIS, 1833-1907	447



ILLUSTRATIONS

THE REUNION OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY	<i>Frontispiece</i>
GASCOIGNE KNEELING TO QUEEN ELIZABETH	34
THE SOUL ATTEMPTING ESCAPE FROM THE BODY	98
THE EARL OF ROCHESTER	152
THE DEATH OF THE STRONG WICKED MAN	176
PORTRAIT OF STEPHEN DUCK	196
FRONTISPIECE TO SHENSTONE'S COLLECTED WORKS	210
PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM HAYLEY	310
THE DISTRESSED POET	348



JOHN SKELTON

1460-1529

A MAN from the common people; face, bold and strong with prominent teeth that stuck out. The coarse-grained pleasures and pastimes of the multitude appealed to him. He liked witnessing bear-baitings, and fights between enraged bulls and ferocious bull-dogs . . . as later, Thomas Warton enjoyed sitting in at hangings.

He loafed about in taverns and ale-houses, enjoying the ribald, unlettered, original-spirited companionship to be found there. . . . These robust propensities did not deter him from becoming poet-laureate and from being recognized by Erasmus as the great Latinist he was . . . nor from taking orders, and serving as rector of Biis in Norfolk for twenty-five years.

Skelton was a man of courage. He did not tremble at attacking the great Cardinal Wolsey when the latter was at the height of his power, in "Why Come Ye Not to Court?" He was compelled to take sanctuary to avoid the consequences of the cardinal's fury.

Skelton poured out pages of rough, profuse, helter-skelter macaronic verse, mostly satiric,—in that headlong, brief metrical form since known as "Skeltonic."

In the thick and torrent of his verse you will often come upon passages of unexpected beauty, sheer as a waterfall.

A Rabelais in little. . . .

Pope averred that Skelton's poems were vulgar and bad. But the Pope who wrote "Imitations of the Older Poets"

and some parts of the "Dunciad" has little call to upbraid Skelton for ribaldry. And he was not above taking hints from the latter's work . . . as Wordsworth, in one instance, was not above rifling an entire passage.

Skelton—

"Methought I saw a shippe goodlye of sayle,
Come sailynge forth into that hauen broad,
Her tackelyne ryche and of hye apparayle."

Wordsworth—

"A goodly vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich of apparel high."

.

WITH LULLAY, LULLAY, LIKE A CHILD

(Or how the young woman beguiled her tired, lack-wit
paramour.)

*With lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.*
"My darling ear, my daisy flower,
Let me," quoth he, "lie in your lap."
"Lie still," quoth she, "my paramour,
Lie still hardëly and take a nap."
His head was heavy, such was his hap,
All drowsy-dreaming, drownéd in sleep,—
That of his love he took no keep:
*With hey, lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.*
With ba, ba, ba, and bas, bas, bas,
She cherishéd him both cheek and chin

That he wist never where he was;
He had forgotten all deadly sin,
He wanted wit her love to win,
He trusted her payment and lost his pay;
She left him sleeping and stole away,
With hey lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.

(Here, on her way to another rendezvous, she wades across the wan waters, skirts held high and pillar-like legs gleaming marble-white in the moonlight.)

The rivers rolled, the waters ran,
She sparéd not to wet her feet,
She waded over, she found a man
That halséd her heartëly, kisséd her sweet;
“My lief,” she said, “rowteth in his bed.
I wis he hath a heavy head.”
With hey, lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.

What dreamest thou, drunkard, drowsy pate,
Thy lust and liking is from thee gone;
Thou blinking snorer, thou wakest too late;
Behold thou liest, sluggard, alone!
Well may thou sigh, well may thou groan,
To deal with her so cowardly;
I wis, powle hatchet, she blearéd thine eye
With hey, lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.

Then this same man who wrote among other rowdy and disorderly rhymes the tale of Elynour Rumming and her ale-house, telling how all the housewives flocked thither, pledging even their household utensils and their goodman's

articles of apparel for more ale on which to grow drunken and to fall about in all sorts of indecent postures—this same poet could turn with a similar lustiness toward God.

TO SEE THY GLORIOUS FACE

O, radiant luminary of light interminable,
Celestial father, potential God of might,
Of heaven and earth, the Lord incomparable,
Of all perfectiões the essential most parfíte!
O, Maker of mankind, that forméd day and night,
Whose power imperial comprehendeth every place!
Mine heart, my mind, my thought, my whole delight,
Is, after this life, to see thy glorious face!

Whose magnificence is incomprehensible,
All arguments of reason which far doth exceed;
Whose Deity is indivisible,
From whom all goodness and virtue doth proceed;
Of thy support all crëatures have need:
Assist me, Lord, and grant me of thy grace,
To live to thy pleasure in word, thought, and deed,
And, after this life, to see thy glorious face.



THOMAS CHURCHYARD

1520-1604

CHURCHYARD's father fitted him out, and sent him off to try his fortunes at Court, "with heels as restless as his head."

At court he throve ill; his whirligig, adventurous nature not being fitted to observance of the courtier's systematic guile and lingering intrigue. . . .

Entering the service of the Earl of Surrey, under the tutelage of England's first sonneteer, he learned the art of verse. . . .

Churchyard claimed to have been impressed into "the service," but doubtless gladly "trailed a pike in the wars."

He henceforth served with ardour, two mistresses—Song, and The Sword.

The satirical poem "Davy Dicar's Dream" brought him into trouble with the Privy Council, and to escape cropped ears, and for his body's further health, he hopped over the Scottish border. He had also fallen under the additional displeasure of Queen Elizabeth for writing of "Our sovereign lady's great regard to soldiers who had gone from court with full hands, that began with empty purses."

In Scotland he made trouble for himself anew, by intriguing on the side of Morton, for England. He "was shot at and hit twice in one day, with a strong bow and with a leaden pellet," and, the next day, "shot at with an arquebus . . . from a window."

Perforce he recrossed the border into England, and there

this ready talker and headlong soldier was pardoned by the Queen.

He wooed the wealthy widow Browning without success.

Laying his sword by, he tried to earn his livelihood by that other weapon, his pen. . . . He won starvation thereby.

War remained his living for thirty years.

Late in life the old poet-warrior settled down in a country cottage with a young wife . . . in his fancy sniffing after the dangers and breaking endeavours of battle, and chafing mightily against domesticity and its settled small routines. . . .

Very old, . . . "often falling sick and like to pass from the world," he died a death of peace in a four-poster bed, . . . "his pen dropping from his hand; his sword, long dis-used, still kept fondly bright, couched like a bride by his side."

No estate was left . . . no children . . . what became of the young widow is not known. . . .

Churchyard's "Worthiness of Wales," in its historico-geographic method, antedated Drayton's "Polyolbion," that vast tract of verse descriptive of England, her geography and history. . . .

His tale of Morton's death has great lines; his "Jane Shore" is deserving of more praise than it has fetched from the poet's posterity.

In Spenser's eclogues he is the "Old Palæmon" who "sung so long until quite hoarse he grew."

Skelton was the one to whom he looked up as master.

Churchyard's last request was to be enearthed beside Skelton, after death.

"I have travelled through the forest of affliction."

Churchyard, in his narrative of the death of Morton—written in 1593—

Had I served God as well in every part
As I did serve my king and master still,
My scope had not this season been so short,
Nor would have had the power to do me ill.

Shakespeare—in “Henry the Eighth”—written in 1673—

“Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, he would not in my age
Have left me naked to my enemies.”

Churchyard’s sayings—

Each man can talk, when that a thing is won.
“This should be done” our after-wits can say,
But few at first find out the ready way.—
Wretched hap rives up renown by root.—
A golden net beguiles a careless fish.—
Their praise is small that pluck back other’s fame,
Their love not great that blot out neighbour’s name.—
The mounting lark comes down to fowler’s hand.—
Ten thousand weeds do grow about a rose.—

A BRIDGE OF GOLD GIVE HIM THAT RUNS FROM THEE.

TO THE LOVER

Why art thou bound and mayest go free?
Shall reason yield to raging will?
Is thralldom like to liberty?
Wilt thou exchange thy good for ill?
Then shalt thou learn a childish play;
And of each part to taste and prove,
The lookers on shall judge and say,
“Lo! this is he that lives by love.”

Thy wits, thy thoughts, shall stand at stay,
Thy head shall have but heavy rest;
Thine eyes shall watch for wanton prey,
Thy tongue shall show thy heart's request;
Thy ears shall hear a thousand noise,
Thy hand shall put thy pen to pain;
And in the end thou shalt dispraise
The life so spent, for such small gain.

If *live* and *list* might never cope,
Nor youth to run from reason's race;
Nor if strong suit might win sure hope,
I would less blame a lover's case;
For love is hot with great desire,
And sweet delight makes youth so fond
That little sparks will grow great fire,
And bring free hearts to endless bond.

SOLDIERS, TRUE AND EXPERIENCED

Of cannon shot they seldom stood afraid,
They knew the crack and howling in the ear
Was half the harm, and most of all the fear.
Such men declared they had a debt to pay,
And still they wished on country's cause to die,
They praised that man that served his prince a day;
They were a fear unto the enemies' eye,
They beautified their bands with bravery.



THOMAS TUSSEER

1524-1580

THE first cock croweth;

“Ho, dame, it is midnight, what rumbling is that?”

The second cock croweth;

“Take heed to false harlots, and more, ye wot what.” . . .

The first cock croweth;

“Maids! three o’clock—knead, lay your bucks, or go brew!”

The second cock croweth;

“—And cobble and botch, ye that cannot buy new.”

The first cock croweth;

“Past five o’clock, Holla! maid, sleeping beware!”

The next cock croweth;

“—Lest quickly your mistres uncover you bare.”

—thus admonish the first and second cock alternately, at various paces of the night, in Thomas Tusser’s “Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry”—that went through twenty editions, and was once proverbial in the mouth of every good English husbandman. . . .

The English farmer in the days when Tusser delved and plowed was an extremely self-sufficient person, his farming comprising many industries since held separate . . . including the making of his shoes, and the weaving of his clothes. . . . In needments not made on his farmstead, he could thrive comfortably by exchange and barter.

His men and maidservants were arduously bound to him, and stood as children of the family; with the power of

parenthood went the power of the rod; both Cicely and Hob received the holly wand across the buttocks for laziness, petty pilfering, bungling work . . . and from four in the summer, five in the winter,—to bed in the dark, at nine or ten, progressed the routine of the day's work. . . .

The morning star was the signal for a breakfast set forth steaming in the tall glimmer of home-made candles. . . .

Tusser did not begin earning his livelihood as husbandman, but as singer.

He was early apprenticed, and served as chorister in the Collegiate Chapel of Wallingford, Berkshire, and was "hired out for his voice, now here, now there."

At Eton he was dusted with a sound thwacking by the Head Master, Nicholas Udall,—the Udall who wrote the early comedy, "Ralph Roister Doister," for the Eton boys to play——

"Fifty-three stripes given to me,

At once I had,

For fault but small, or none at all. . . ."

Having served his singing apprenticeship, Tusser sang in the King's Chapel, St. Paul's Cathedral . . . afterward entering the service of Baron Paget as one of his musicians.

After ten years at court, he married. His wife, suffering delicate health, he settled on the land, a Suffolk farmer, hoping for her cure in good, fresh country air. But the rigours of the farm vitiated, for one used to the refinements of the court, the good effect of the country. . . . Tusser moved vainly to Ipswich, for air still better—where his wife died, languishing for the court. . . .

A second marriage . . . and once more his profession, singing . . . in Norwich Cathedral. . . .

Tusser could not keep away from cleaving plow and the smell of fresh-turned furrows, and the birds walking be-

hind for the share-exposed worms. He farmed again . . . once more to give up the occupation, driven by a severe local manifestation of the plague, to London. . . .

It was through his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry" that, now long forgotten, Tusser grew into a household word.

Tusser's rhymes are mostly wretched doggerel, with here and there a colour of beauty. Tusser elucidates in his works all the practical details of farmcraft . . . sowing and plowing and reaping . . . the tending of cattle and horses . . . the building of barn and house . . . turns of climate and shifts of wind, and phases of the moon. He retails homely remedies for ills of beast and man. . . .

He suggests as remedy "for flux in cattle and man—sloes seethed in water, with powdered, dry chalk"; and he advises the English yeoman to "sell the measled hog" to the foreigner, the tradesman Fleming "who loves it so daintily well."

You find yourself, patiently reading, among the pungen-
cies of soil and compost heap. In the rhymes of this dog-
gerel Hesiod the very names of the farm-help flavour of
haymows and green fields . . . Minikin Nan . . . Cicely
. . . Jankin and Jennykin . . . Kit . . . Jill . . . Nicholl
. . . Runagate Robin . . . Hugh Prowler . . . Gillet
. . . Hugh Makeshift. . . .

Fuller writes of Tusser—

"He spread his bread thick with all sorts of butter, and none of it stuck."

The author admits, of himself—

By practice and ill speeding
These lessons had their breeding.

Tusser's sayings—

Whatever God sendeth, be merry withal.—

Too late doth kill,
Too soon, is as ill.—

Naught venture, naught have.

POSIES FOR A PARLOUR

As hatred is the serpent's noisome rod;
So friendship is the loving gift of God.

The drunken friend is friendship very evil;
The frantic friend is friendship for the devil.

The quiet friend, all one in word and deed,
Great comfort is, like ready gold at need.

With brawling fools, that brawl for every wrong,
Firm friendship never can continue long. . . .

Oft times a friend is got with easy cost,
Which uséd evil is as quickly lost.

Hast thou a friend, as heart may wish at will?
Then use him so, to have his friendship still.

Wouldst have a friend, wouldst know what
friend is best?

Have God thy friend, who passeth all the rest.

TENANTS OF GOD'S FARMSTEAD

The lands and the riches that here we possess,
Be none of our own, if a God we profess;
But lent us of him, as his talent of gold,
Which being demanded, who can it withhold?
God maketh no writing that justly doth say
How long we shall have it—a year or a day. . . .

To Death we must stoop, be we high, be we low,
But how, and how suddenly, few be that know;
What carry we then but a sheet to the grave,
To cover this carcass, of all that we have?

TUSSER'S PRINCIPAL POINTS OF RELIGION

To pray to God continually,
To learn to know him rightfully,
To honour God in Trinity,
The Trinity in Unity,
The Father in his majesty,
The Son in his humanity,
The Holy Ghost's benignity,
Three persons, one in Deity.
To serve him always, holily,
To praise him in all company,
To love him always, heartily,
To dread him alway, christianly,
To ask him mercy, penitently,
To trust him alway, faithfully,
To obey him alway, willingly,
To abide him alway, patiently,
To thank him alway, thankfully,
To live here alway, virtuously,
To use thy neighbour, honestly,
To look for death still, presently,
To help the poor, in misery,
To hope for Heaven's felicity,
To have faith, hope, and charity,
To count this life but vanity,—
Be points of Christianity.



GEORGE GASCOIGNE

1525-1577

GEORGE GASCOIGNE was no sequestered, bookish poet. He wrote of himself that he "lived at large and played with pleasure's ball," and of his youth,—“the wanton world of young, delightful years was not unlike a heaven for to behold.” Did not Wordsworth have these lines in the back of his mind when he wrote the celebrated lines on the French Revolution in

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!”

Leaving Trinity College, Cambridge, without a degree, Gascoigne entered Gray's Inn, waveringly determined on the study of law; but he was more addicted to jolly rhyming, for which he was well liked there, than devoted to studious application.

His father disinherited him for his extravagance.

On top of this misfortune, he fell foul of an unhappy love, and his disappointment sent him roving about his own country and France.

He dubbed himself, and was so called by others—"The Green Knight."

The Green Knight was a character in an old romance, who, in a combat at dawn, for the love of a woman,—was defeated and obliged to relinquish his claim. . . .

Home again from various roving . . . to retrieve his fortunes, he married a well-to-do London widow, mother



GASCOIGNE KNEELING TO QUEEN ELIZABETH

of the poet Nicholas Breton . . . and, it seems, helped himself somewhat illegally to what should have gone to his stepchildren. For the Lord Mayor of London, appealed to, intervened with an order of investigation . . . whatever the exact outcome, it is apparent that Gascoigne succeeded in sequestrating for himself out of the widow's property, a house for himself at Walthamstow; which was to serve him for a quiet religious and literary retreat in his last years. . . .

"His numerous debts forced him to hide himself away in obscure villages." In spite of which he set himself up for M. P. for Midhurst; and was returned . . . only to be petitioned against by his creditors, who charged him with insolvency, manslaughter, atheism, and with being "a common rhymmer, and a deviser of slanderous pasquils against divers persons of great calling."

It was a contemporary who wrote of him, "Gascoigne never had been dainty in his doings."

To avoid complications, Gascoigne slipped off on ship-board for the wars in the Low Countries . . . and the drunken Dutch pilot ran his ship aground off the Holland Coast . . . twenty were drowned . . . Gascoigne and two companions with difficulty escaped with their rascally lives. . . .

This English Villon of sorts now obtained a captain's commission under William of Orange, and saw hard service against the Spaniards . . . quarreled with his Colonel . . . scarcely had the quarrel been compounded in his favour, by William of Orange's personal intercession, when, because of an intercepted letter from a lady, a love of his at the Hague (that town being then in the hands of the Spaniards) Gascoigne was taken, accused, and acquitted of being a spy. . . .

Returning a second time to his native land, he wrote as

his motto on every possible occasion: "Tam Marte quam Mercurio"—which, translated largely, means "Masterly with both sword and pen." . . .

After his first disappointment in love that won him the appellation of "The Green Knight," he seems to have reaped the joys of a succession of light affairs. It was at the age of forty that he again fell desperately in love, with a young woman at Bath; after some brief happiness she left him to go to London and he fell deathly sick for her lack. . . .

Being nearly recovered, he concocted a drink for his friends . . . an especial one of his own . . . and, when complimented on its being as tasteful as Hippocras, poor Gascoigne wept into the beverage . . . wept for dear reminiscence . . . for it was Hippocras that had been his sweetheart's favourite drink.

Shortly, following the girl to London and enduring a passing reconciliation, he soon suffered the final disillusionment which verified the report his friends had made against her honesty. He retails the story of this affair in his "Delectable History of Dan Bartholemew of Bath."

Gascoigne wrote a masque and verses for Elizabeth at Kenilworth, going thither in the Queen's train.

In his last years the hitherto active poet-soldier was an invalid and moved about in a small space.

He devoted his last days to pious meditation and song.

Dead, he quickly fell out of date and fashion, and the following generation of youth, considering themselves sophisticates, spoke patronizingly of "Old Gascoigne."

Despite his rascalion life, or because of it, Gascoigne's heart was ever sincerely lifted up for right morality and godly behaviour; he continually preached righteousness in his rhymes; robustly, not pratingly.

"The life of man," he maintains, "was lent him to be

spent in gladsome wise, but with the fear of God in his heart."

In his Fourth Song in his long poem, "The Grief of Joy," Gascoigne attacked the dancing of the day and a few lines of it must have stuck in Byron's memory, when he wrote his satire "The Waltz."

Gascoigne—

In dance the hand hath liberty to touch,
The eye, to gaze, the arm for to embrace,
Which otherwise might give great cause for grutch—
The exercise acquits the blushing face. . . .
And lends much leave with much more time and place
The darksome night, sharp enemy to shame,
By candles light, betrayeth many a dame.—

Byron—

"Hands which may freely range in public sight
Where ne'er before,—but pray 'put out the light'—
Methinks the glare of yonder chandelier
Shines much too far, or I am much too near;
And true, though strange, Waltz whispers this remark,
'My slipping steps are safest in the dark.' "

And—

"Some potentate
Leads forth the ready dame whose rising flush
Might once have been mistaken for a blush."

And—

"Round the small confines of the yielded waist
The strangest hands may wander undisplaced."

Gascoigne loved the elder poets. He writes of Chaucer, in relation to his own works—

But if some English word herein seem sweet
Let Chaucer's name exalted be therefore.—

He describes restless and vain women as persons “which all day seem stingéd with bees”—adding—“they talk far off, their minds are elsewhere.”

He also observed that “This poetical licence is a shrewd fellow.”

Many of his poems he composed while on horseback, keeping them in memory and writing them down later. He composed “The Complaint of Philomela” thus . . . and, on his returning to Gray's Inn for renewed study, with five companions riding with him, at their request he delivered himself of a poem for each of them—on Latin mottoes each had proposed in turn. . . .

Incidentally, Sir Henry Wotton held passages of rhyming with his riding companions. There might be a considerable anthology sharked up, of “Riding Verse,” a lively practice of the Elizabethans and the Cavaliers; they having not yet slumped into the horsey, fox-hunting, shallow-witted gentry who wore stupidity and expressionlessness instead of poetry and facundity, for an ornament and open boast.

In appearance George Gascoigne was lean and sinewy, and he presented a warrior's nerve-taut face, with vexed, uneasy, smallish eyes worn and faded from the watches and forays of difficult peace and hazardous war.

Gascoigne's sayings—

All men are guests where hope doth hold the feast.—

A woman's wit is best at sudden call.—

Age steals unto our privy gate
And in the dark doth silently invade
Youth's fort unawares.

O, LADIES, GIVE ME LEAVE

(In Praise of His Beloved)

O, ladies, give me leave, I praise not her too far
Since she doth pass you all as much as Titan stains a star.
You hold such servants dear as able are to serve;
She held me dear when I, poor soul, could no good thing
deserve.

You set by them that swim in all prosperity,
She set by me whenas I was in great calamity.
You best esteem the brave, and let the poorest pass;
She best esteemed my poor, good will,—all naked as I was.

THE UNREPENTANT LOVER

When I record within my musing mind
The noble names of wights bewitched in love,
Such solace for myself therein I find,
As nothing may my fixéd fancy move:
But patiently I will endure my woe
Because I see the heavens ordain it so. . . .
So that, to end the tale as it began,
I see the good, the wise, the stout, the bold,
The strongest champion and the learned'st man
Have been, and be, by lust of love controlled,—
Which, when I think, I hold me well content
To live in love, and never to repent.

LOVE, ONCE LET IN

These be the fruits which grow on such desire,
These be the gains y-got by such an art;
Too late comes he that seeks to quench the fire
When flames possess the house in every part;
Who list in peace to keep a quiet heart
Fly love betimes; for if he once o'ertake him,

If once thou take him tenant in thy breast
No writ nor force can serve to pluck him thence,
No pills can purge his humour like the rest,
He bides in bones and there takes residence;
Against his blows no buckler makes defence,
And though (with pain) thou put him from thy
house,
Yet lurks he still in corners like a mouse.

THE BOOKISH MAN SURVIVES

The weakling he sits buzzing at his book,
Or keeps full close, and loves to lie in quiet;
For lack of force he warily doth look
In every dish that may disturb his diet;
He neither fights nor runneth after riot,
But stays his steps by mean and measure too,
And longer lives than many strong men do.

THE SNAIL AND THE SOLDIER

No haste but good where wisdom makes the way,
For proof whereof, behold the simple snail
(Who sees the soldier's carcas* cast away,
With hot assault the castle to assail)
By line and measure climb the lofty wall,
And win the turret's top more cunningly
Than Doughty Dick, who lost his life and all
With hoisting up his head too hastily.

* A hand-grenade.

*The Great Four-Poster Bed of the Time, Compared
in All Ways to the Grave—*

The stretching arms, the yawning breath which I to-bed-ward use
Are patterns of the pangs of death when life shall me refuse:
And of my bed each sundry part with shadows doth resemble
The sundry shapes of death whose dart shall make my flesh to tremble.
My bed itself is like the grave, my sheets the winding sheet,
My clothes the mold which I must have to cover me most meet:
The hungry fleas which frisk so fresh, to worms I can compare
Which greedily shall gnaw my flesh and leave the bones full bare;
The waking cock that early crows to wear the night away
Puts in my mind the trump that blows before the Judgment Day.

CHRIST, THY LOVE FORERUNNETH

THOU HEARKENEST FIRST, BEFORE WE COME TO CALL;
THINE EARS ARE SET WIDE OPEN EVERMORE;
BEFORE WE KNOCK THOU COMEST TO THE DOOR.



JOHN HIGGINS

1544-?

JOHN HIGGINS, a belated scholar and literary man, who did not begin to learn reading and writing till he was twenty.

He entered Oxford, a late student.

He devoted himself chiefly to French and Latin.

He taught school, was a translator, and wrote the first part of the "Mirror For Magistrates."

He took orders and delighted in theological controversy.

His life was obscure, the date of his death, uncertain.

THE TRUTH ABOUT FORTUNE

Some love to boast what fortune they have had,
Some others blame misfortune theirs as fast,
Some tell of fortunes there be good and bad,
Some fools of fortune make themselves aghast,
Some show of fortunes coming, present, past,
And say there is a fate that ruleth all:
But sure it seems their wisdom is but small,
To talk so much of Lady Fortune's ball.

No fortune is so bad but we it frame,
There is no chance at all hath us preserved,
There is no fate whom we have need to blame,
There is no destiny but is deserved,
No luck that leaves us safe or unpreserved:
Let us not then complain of Fortune's skill,
For all our good descends from God's good will,
And of our lewdness springeth all our ill.



ROBERT SOUTHWELL

1561 (?)—1595

A GENTLE and devout Catholic poet . . . his face forboding an exquisite martyrdom; a soaring agony to look upon. . . .

Having studied with the Jesuits on the continent, in company with several other young priests, he voyaged back to his own country, full of zeal for the conversion of England to the Catholic Faith, to the point of laying down his own life. . . .

Living in a strict and ascetic manner, he began to proselytize . . . was consequently taken and thrown into jail . . . put to the torture ten times . . . yet, in the words of a contemporary "he endured his inquisition more like a post than a man". . . .

They threw him into a dungeon reeking with all manner of filth and its darkness alive with vermin; where he abode till his father, a man of some substance, courageously and by direct personal appeal to the King, obtained for his zealot son not freedom but the consideration of a better imprisonment, and the privilege of obtaining the books that he loved. . . .

After three years spent in this manner, he was inevitably doomed to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. . . .

Driven afield standing upright on the bed of a wagon,—the noose about his neck,—he delivered with fiery simplicity so simple and affecting a last confession of faith, that, in spite of the fanatics of the opposite sect who strove

to interrupt him, his opponents were cried down by a crowd at first as hostile, but, despite themselves, moved and shaken by the poet-priest's exhibition of piety.

The cart was driven from under . . . the noose had been poorly adjusted and the hangman, exercising a bitter mercy, dragged down on the condemned man's feet to terminate his struggling and writhing. . . .

Before the customary dismemberment of the body for burning, Southwell lying dead,—his face presented a freshness and bloom as if he were but sleeping a brief, refreshing sleep before waking to the warmth of the sunlight on his closed eyes. . . .

Torn out of its place, the heart leaped from the executioner's hand, like something alive. . . .

After Southwell's death his sister obtained possession of his relics, which were said to have cured innumerable diseases. . . .

His poems, for the most part written under imprisonment, are vigorous productions burning with sincerity always, with soaring ecstasy often.

For all their vigour they present grave faults of over-packed terseness and too great abundance and continual shift of images heaped one upon the other.

ILL PRECEDENT

Ill precedent, the tide that wafts to vice;
Dumb orator, that woos with silent deeds,
Writing in works lessons of ill advice;
The doing tale that eye in practice reads.
Taster of joys to unacquainted hunger,
With leaven of the old seasoning the younger.

HER HOUSE IS SLOTH

Her house is sloth, her door deceit,
And slippery hope her stairs;
Unabashed boldness bids her guests,
And every vice repairs.

Her diet is of such delights
As please, till they be past;
But then the poison kills the heart
That did entice the taste. . . .

Plow not the seas, sow not the sands,
Leave off your idle pain;
Seek other mistress for your minds,
Love's service is in vain.

I ENVY NOT THEIR HAP

I envy not their hap
Whom favour doth advance;
I take no pleasure in their pain
That have less happy chance.
To rise by others' fall
I deem a losing gain;
All states with others' ruin built
To ruin run amain.
No chance of Fortune's calms
Can cast my fortune down.
When Fortune smiles, I smile to think
How quickly she will frown.
And when in froward mood
She proves an angry foe,
Small gain I find to let her come,
Less loss to let her go!

THE VICTOR BABE

His camp is pitchéd in a stall,
His bulwark is a broken wall,
His crib, his trench,—haystalks his stakes,
Of shepherds he his muster makes;
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarums sound:
My soul, with Christ join thou in fight;
Stick to the tents that he hath pight: *
Within his crib is surest ward,
This little babe will be thy guard;
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy
Then flit not from this heavenly boy!

* Pitched.



MICHAEL DRAYTON

1563-1614

THE SON of a butcher. Of the very yeoman aristocracy, for he derived his descent so far back as to antedate the origins of many of the noble families from which he sought, for the most part, patronage in vain. . . .

Drayton's boyhood showed scholarly promise and he was taken into the household of Sir Thomas Goodere, and was there maintained and schooled . . . where, unfortunately for himself, he promptly fell in love with the knight's daughter, Anne; and, for the duration of his days, was stretched on the rack of this one love. . . . This passion of the poet breathes all the fire of sincerity. Twenty-five years after Anne Goodere's marriage, Drayton felt strongly enough to write to her "I am still inviolate to you" and, "an evil spirit, your beauty haunts me still."

This feeling was moderated by necessity into a show of conventional expression. The lady's husband became the poet's "cherished and hospitable friend."

Anne Goodere's attractions were not entirely in the poet's mind, for her doctor (Shakespeare's brother-in-law) said of her that "she was beautiful and of a gallant structure of body."

Drayton in person was a swart, stringy little man a-buzz with extreme energy. He was possessed of the deep-set eyes of the fanatic.

He was loved and respected for his strict moral behaviour. It had not the least taint of cant or hypocrisy.

His smallness of body made him unhappy; he was especially chagrined by the attitude of women toward a man of his stature . . . like Christopher Smart who wrote (in his poem "The Author apologizes to a Lady, for his being a little man"—Ode Nine)—

"Ye contumelious fair, ye scorn
The amorous dwarf that courts you to his arms."

But, though Drayton's body was diminutive, his mind walked with giant dreams, and he devoted his days and efforts to a true and exalted striving after the supreme laurels of poetic immortality . . . poetry was, after Christianity, his religion . . . he was erudite . . . infinitely laborious . . . kept himself, in fact, too tense,—strained too hard to grasp the prize that slipped him by for easier hands . . . "powerful memory destroyed his inspiration". . .

Yet his work remains, for whoever cares to have recourse to it, a great stream of pure English. His verse always preserves a high, even style. If it never touches Shakespeare's amazing sublimities, it is never guilty of such rank and senseless stuff as the stale buffooneries of some of the latter's clowns. . . .

Drayton planned, and, in a way, executed colossally, such works as the "Polyolbion" which contains thirty thousand Alexandrines, and attempts a complete description of the natural scenery, history, and folklore of England. . . .

In the midst of his most pretentious strains, he has a faculty of saving himself by snatches of sweet and liquid melody like the songs of those little birds that he specially loved and made record of, that sang everywhere in thicket, hedge, and holt . . . to the singing of which he refers again and again, ever with fresh delight. . . .

He was too conscientious at re-writing and altering his verse. A great many editions of his works appeared during

his lifetime. Today he is as much underestimated as he was in his time overesteemed.

Milton took hints from his "Barons' Wars". . . .

Goldsmith said when he came upon Drayton's monument in Westminster Abbey, "Drayton? I never heard of him before," which should be looked upon, not as an ironical, but a regrettably ignorant remark.

Drayton extolled the virtues of sack as an inspirer to song; and there is a curious passage in one of the old prose writers to the effect that "Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted."

THE POET AND THE WITLESS GALLANT

A witless gallant, a young wench that wooed
(Yet his dull spirit her one jot could not move)
Entreated me, as e'er I wished his good,
To write him but one sonnet to his love:
When I, as fast as e'er my fancy could,
Poured out what first from quick invention came;
Nor never stood one word thereof to blot,
Much like his wit that was to use the same:
But with my verses he his mistress won,
Who doted on the dolt beyond all measure,
But see, for you to heaven for phrase I run,
And ransack all Apollo's golden treasure;
Yet by my froth this fool his love obtains,
And I lose you for all my wit and pains.

LIKE TO A MAN EMBARKED—

Like to a man embarked, and travelling the deep:
Who sailing by some hill, or promontory steep
Which juts into the sea, with an amazed eye

Beholds the cliffs thrust up into the lofty sky,
And th' more that he doth look, the more it draws his sight;
Now, at the craggy point, then at the wondrous height:
But, from the passéd shore still as the swelling sail
(Thrust forward by the wind) the floating bark doth hail,
The mighty giant-heap, so less and lesser still
Appareth to the eye, until the monstrous hill
At length shows like a cloud; and farther being cast,
Is out of kenning quite: SO OF THE AGES PAST!

THE DYING CRANE

Lo, in a valley peopled thick with trees,
Where the soft day continual evening sees,
Where, in the moist and melancholy shade,
The grass grows rank, but yields a bitter blade,
I found a poor crane sitting all alone,
That from his breast sent many a throbbing groan;
Groving he lay, that sometimes stood upright;
Maimed of his joints in many a doubtful fight:
His ashy coat that bore a gloss so fair,
So often kissed of the enamoured air;
Worn all to rags, and fretted so with rust,
That with his feet he trod it in the dust:
And wanting strength to bear him to the springs,
The spiders wove their webs even in his wings:
And in his train their filmy netting cast.

To My Dearly Loved Friend, Henry Reynolds, Esq.

OF POETS AND POESY

My dearly lovéd friend, how oft have we,
In winter evenings (meaning to be free)
To some well chosen place used to retire,
And there with moderate meat, and wine, and fire,

Have passed the hours contentedly with chat,
Now talked of this, and then discoursed of that,
Spoke our own verses, 'twixt ourselves, if not
Other men's lines, which we by chance had got,
Or some stage-pieces famous long before,
Of which our happy memory had store;
And I remember you much pleaséd were,
Of those who lived so long ago to hear,
As well as of those, of these latter times,
Who have enriched our language with their rhymes,
And in succession how still up they grew,
Which is the subject which I now pursue;
For from my cradle (you must know) that I
Was still enclined to noble poesy,
And when that once pueriles I had read,
And newly had my Cato construëd,
In my small self I greatly marvelled then,
Amongst all other, what strange kind of men
These poets were, and pleaséd with the name,
To my mild tutor merrily I came,
(For I was then a proper, goodly page,
Much like a pigmy, scarce ten years of age)
Clasping my slender arms about his thigh.
"O, my dear master! cannot you (quoth I)
Make me a poet? Do it, if you can,
And you shall see I'll quickly be a man."



JOSEPH HALL, BISHOP OF NORWICH

1574-1656

HALL's pious, ghostly-bodied and ghostly-minded mother bent her son's mind toward religion from his infancy; he was gladly destined for the Church at birth, by both father and mother.

The good, narrowly pious, God-devoted lad wholly assented to his parents' plans. . . .

He prayed upon his knees before studying in a book. He was sure of being enriched with God's personal guidance—saying, on one occasion, "Methinks God pulls me by the sleeve."

In witness of his absolute belief in God's direct interest and intercession, in his affairs—I quote a passage concerning his quarrel with the poet Lyly, author of the *Euphues*—from his autobiographical fragment "Observations of Some Specialties of Divine Providence in the Life of Joseph Hall"—

"Having fixed my foot at Halsted" (where he had been inducted into a living) "I found there a dangerous opposite to the success of my ministry, a witty and bold atheist, one Mr. Lyly; who, by reason of his travails and abilities of discourse and behaviour, had so deeply insinuated himself into my patron, Sir Robert Drury, that there was small hopes, during his entireness, for me to work any good upon that patron of mine; who, by the suggestion of this wicked detractor, was set off from me before he knew me. Hereupon, I confess, finding the obduredness and hopeless con-

dition of that man, I bent my prayers against him; beseeching God daily, that he would be pleased to remove, by some means or other, that apparent hinderance of my faithful labours: WHO GAVE ME AN ANSWER ACCORDINGLY; FOR THIS MALICIOUS MAN, GOING HASTILY UP TO LONDON TO EXASPERATE MY PATRON AGAINST ME, WAS THEN AND THERE SWEEPED AWAY BY THE PESTILENCE; AND NEVER RETURNED TO DO ANY FURTHER MISCHIEF."

Hall, who contests with Marston the place of first English satirist, wrote all his poetry, including his satires, in his youth, and he did not touch his pen to rhyme afterwards. He wrote great English prose. . . .

"Poetry was the occupation merely of his youth; the vigour and decline of his days being employed in the composition of professional works, calculated, by their piety, eloquence, and originality, to promote, in the most powerful manner, the best interests of morality and religion."

His satires were criticized adversely by Pope, who, as usual, borrowed from the works of the poet falling under his strictures.

GULLION

(From "The Satires")

When Gullion died (who knows not Gullion?)
And his dry soul arrived at Acheron,
He fair besought the ferryman of hell,
That he might drink to dead Pantàgruel.
Charon was afraid lest thirsty Gullion
Would have drunk dry the river Acheron;
Yet last consented for a little hire:
And down he dips his chops deep in the mire,
And drinks, and drinks, and swallows in the stream,
Until the shallow shores all naked seem.
Yet still he drinks, till the blank caravél

Stands still, fast gravelled on the mud of hell.
There stand they still, nor can go, nor retire,
Though greedy ghosts quick passage did require.
Yet stand they still, as though they lay at rode,
Till Gullion his bladder would unload.
They stand, and wait, and pray for that good hour;
Which, when it came, they sailèd to the shore.

ELEGY ON SIR EDWARD AND LADY LEWKENOR

In bonds of love united, man and wife,
Long, yet too short, they spent a happy life:
United still, too soon, however late,
Both man and wife received the stroke of fate:
And now, in glory clad, the enraptured pair,
The same bright cup, the same sweet draught
they share.
Thus, first and last, a married couple see,
In life, in death, in immortality!



FRANCIS ROUS

1579-1658

IN THE history of English Literature Francis Rous ought sadly to be put in the same category as the boy-prodigy Chatterton. On the completion of his "Thule; or Vertue's Victorie," in his sixteenth year, he should have died and joined the ranks of those poets whose immaturity proved more golden than the whole maturity of many who fulfilled the Muses' tasks to the end. For an ironic fate let him survive the poetry of his youth; and he turned into one of the most stern fanatics of the Commonwealth; a theocrat who, after procuring a vote that Cromwell and others should sit in the House, of which he was a member, then proposed the resignation of the Government into Cromwell's hands with the title of Protector . . . and he strove also, with might and main, to bring in an English theocracy after the manner of that of the ancient Hebrews.

One of the first followers of Spenser, the author of "Thule" became Speaker of the Bare-Bones Parliament.

In his sixtieth year he translated the psalms into English verse. This translation was adopted by the Commons, and it became the established version for the Kirk of Scotland.

When, at the age of nineteen, Rous published his "Thule," he eschewed the customary prefatory poems of personal eulogy, the poetic encomiums of friends, for he had a large scorn of what is today called "Log-rolling."

The poet sets the scene of the action of his long Spenserian poem, in "Iceland, that arctic-seated isle"—knights

again ride about the countryside on ramping chargers, to rescue virgins from castles where they are held in thrall—imminent victims of lust. . . .

Despite its trite content of confused allegory, that “Thule” is an unusual work, lines like the following can testify:

“Purple violets never growing right”—to instance the thick manner in which violets grow in crowds. . . .

As the spirit of the Lake-Woman shows her face, there comes a Tennysonian “rushing of the lake as with a blast.”

And the description of a girl turning into dryad——

A spreading root her feeble feet upbore,
A furrowed rind encompassed all her skin,
A tree she was without, a maid within.—

But slumber in his senses now did hatch,
Partly by toil wherewith he now was sore,
Partly by music sounding at his door.—

The following couplet has been often quoted——

For what hard heart would not all service do
To help a fair, a chaste, a woman too?——

Other striking lines——

The tossed ship of life.—

A crystal glass she forth doth take,

Holding it against the shining sun,

That beams contracted might a fire make,

WHOSE SMOKE INTO A LIVELY SOUL MIGHT RUN!——

About the darkening of the conquered day

On the plain he spied a mighty tree

Whose green attire did shield the falling rain.—

Silver wings of former fame.—

His face so pale and skin transparent was,

It seemed a ghastly looking glass of death.—

While on his carcase crows and ravens dwell.—

(“Dwell” somehow shows the multitude of them blackening the still body.)

Of love unrequited—

I turn with Sisyphus a restless stone.—

We have a mighty ocean yet anew

Through which our tossed ships to port must fly.—

A wight whose face the sun had died to sunny black.—

Sweet honey issuing from a silver cell.—

The lightning of black envy.—

Huge mighty corpse * they have which like a tree

March to and fro.—

Myself by those her arrows goréd found

Which fly from that fair bow of her sweet face.—

Rous’s sayings—

Prayers, the sweet ambassadors to God,

The heralds to prepare a better life.

To virtue no way ever happens ill.—

Though Argus hundred eyes in watch doth keep

Yet lust at length will lull them all asleep.

Death’s servant, sickness.

Icarus, once drowned, can teach you how to fly.

These women needs will have the upper hand!

THAT TO A WOMAN’S CARE

Whate’er thou be that to a woman’s care

Committest affairs and matters of import,

* Here means living body.

Too rashly to adventure do not dare,
Unless upon some certain truth's report:
For constancy in most is found but rare—
And they will change their thoughts for wanton sport.

GO, WHISTLING WINDS
(The Lovers Meet at Last)

Go, whistling winds, with easy murmuring bring
This happy Lady to her heart's desire,
And all the way let sweetest music sing
Melodious concert in love-carols by her. . . .
She gives him kisses, pledges of her heart,
The honey-dew with which fair love is fed:
Such is the billing of the Cyprian dove,
Their mouths in other's mouth imprisonéd:
But she with talk loosing that rosial bind,
Drew back her lips, but left her heart behind.

THE SINGING MOUNT

They saw a little mount that with his head
A prospect made upon the smiling main:
No bushy tree his beauty shadowéd,
But open his fair flowery top hath lain:
And to the hill a path directly led. . . .

Straight to their ears the sweetest harmony
Doth blow, that ever sweet to ear can blow,
Whose force like fire could melt black cruelty,
And make it quickly gentle mercy know.
From out that little hill it soft doth fly,
As if Apollo all his art could show:
A little death it is, which up doth send
Our souls to heaven, before we make our end.

THE DEAD FAMOUS MAN

But he is dead (woe worth that such should die)
And darkness triumphs o'er his rotten mass:
But his bright fame shall on her pinions fly,
As long as light from Eos' door shall pass:
Nor ever may that base obscurity
Blot from men's thought that such an artist was:
Oblivion, all thy teeth may ne'er devour
His famous name's still over-living power.

HEART, LEAVE TO PINE

Heart, leave to pine, since pining cannot save,
Soul, love not her that doth not love thy love,
Mind, be no longer to that force a slave,
That can deep passions, but no mercy move;
You clouds of sorrow, no more issue have,
This tree for all your wat'ring will not prove:
For that fair plant 'bout which your waters flow,
In midst of them, all barren, will not grow.

DEAR SOULS THAT WANDER

Dear soul whatever wander'st here below,
Chained in the sinful body's sensual bands,
Yield not thy self to what doth fairest show,
Nor walking in these worldly Nilus sands,
Give listening to the tunes that sweet do blow:
'T is easy falling into pleasure's hands,
But at dear rate he selleth all his ware,
The entrance pleaseth, but the end is care.

IT WAS A BLOODY MAN

It was a bloody man that did exceed
In furious wrath; each word would make him fight:

Yet mighty was he; and his happy speed
Caused him of any foes to make but light:
And still his jaws like smoky Orcus' cave
Would reek with oaths when he did curse and rave.

THE COWARD

Never in ought he hath his valour tried,
But is so faint and humble slave to fear,
That when the shadow of his lance he spied,
His fainting carcass downward 'gan to bear.
—he very studious bethought
How he the battle any way might flee,
Or if he fought, some place of flight espy.

WHEN IN THE ÆGEAN OF THY WANDERING DAYS

When in the Ægean of thy wandering days
Fortune full softly fills thy swelling sail,
Let no Circeas * hinder quite thy ways,
Nor let her cups against thy heart prevail,
Then virtue of thy spotted soul decays
Blinded in worldly pleasure's cloudy veil:
Thus pleasure's draught shall so bewitch thy will,
Well may'st thou see the good, but do the ill.

* Circe.



JOHN TAYLOR, THE WATER POET

1580-1654

"OF HUMBLE origin." His father tried to procure him the advantage of an education, but, though nimble-minded and multifariously curious about life, the boy was unable to master the Latin accidence . . . and was removed from school, and, in a burst of parental despair, apprenticed to a Thames waterman.

At an early age, he was impressed into the Queen's Navy, and he sailed, altogether, on sixteen voyages in Elizabeth's service.

When he returned to his calling of waterman, the removal of the London theatres to the Surrey side of the river together with the multiplication in number of watermen and especially the introduction of the hackney-coach, set up too much competition to suit him. (Much as the introduction of taxis has, at the present day, crowded out the old-fashioned cabby, and he was as bitter against the "new-fangleness" of the hackney-coach, as the old cabby is against the taxi.)

Taylor set up as an innkeeper, and prospered. For he was good talking company, and an ideal merry host, full of facetious tales, lively yarns, pleasant quips. . . .

Over his inn, obstinately loyal, on the death of Charles, he hung out a sign legended, "The Mourning Crown." In this action he did not take example of Waller and several other less sincere though greater poets, who adroitly trimmed to the changing times, inditing panegyrics in praise

of Cromwell . . . and of the Restoration monarch, when he came in power . . . this got Taylor into trouble, this honesty of his—luckily, because of his being known already as an eccentric, an oddity, the result just shaved this side of the serious in its complications. He was compelled to remove the sign. In quaint egotism he substituted his own head with the motto—

“There’s many a head stands for a sign
Then, gentle reader, why not mine?”

Taylor made a number of eccentric journeys on wagers, the first being a trip afoot to Edinburgh, from London, accompanied by “his man and his nag” . . . the nag being laden with wine and provender for the start. “My legs I made my oars, and rowed by land,” he said of himself, in watermen’s parlance. “I neither borrowed, craved, asked, begged, or bought”—but various folk and hosts of inns by the way saw to it, evidently, that the wagerer did not lack, for he writes further, “Most laborious with my teeth I wrought.”

On the way to Edinburgh he met with Ben Jonson returning from his famed parley with the Scotch poet, Drummond of Hawthornden . . . and Ben gave John a guinea to help him along. . . .

Every locality where he was received with favour and hospitality he mentions, after the same manner, in his verse . . . and where he was not well-treated, he returns the compliment. Of one unkindly hostess he wrote—

Mine hostess from her door came out,
Having a great wart rampart on her snout.

Besides his travels a-foot, Taylor rowed in his wherry by sea from York to London. He rowed, in the course of the years, over all the water-ways of England. His most

unique water-journey was when he went from London to Queensborough in a boat made of brown paper, with two dried stock-fish tied to canes for oars.

At the age of sixty-four, while in a field, he received a lame leg of a thunderbolt,—but, lame, he still made, ten years later on, a foot-journey through Wales. In like manner he travelled somewhat on the Continent, once journeying as far as Bohemia.

Kings and Queens, the nobility, and the dignitaries of the Church noticed him for, and were vastly amused by, his harmless spectacularities, and he was welcome at their tables . . . while, as he passed through their bounds, mayors and corporations received him with civic honours.

In person the water-poet was of middle stature; thick-set; his face presented the well-fed, ruddy rotundity of the man who lives an active life, has a good digestion, and eats and drinks heartily and well . . . his eyes were small, with an expression of innocent natural shrewdness in them; there was a facund playfulness about the lips. . . .

Taylor was master of a knack of easy rhyming like Byrom . . . but he was the opposite of Byrom in education and formal knowledge . . . though by no means the ignorant lout Southey stigmatized him as being—the unsympathetic book-prig, Southey, whose entire life was walled in by the shelves of his library, and who might himself have benefited in human knowledge by moving about for a while as Taylor had done. Several generations later, similar literate snobs helped drive the naïve, inspired laborer-poet, John Clare, into the mad-house. . . .

Taylor's homely and indiscriminate particularization of every incident and trivial event militated against his poetic excellence. He was too "thing-minded."

But it was this very "thing-mindedness," this very par-

ticularization and quaint matter-of-factness that brought him acceptability with the rabble.

Taylor's scores of publications are a storehouse of minutiae of the trades, modes, moods, and manners of his age.

He wrote on every subject from the Excellences of the Virgin to a pamphlet in praise of the uses of the needle,—on the Antiquity of Beggars, and on the Inns of London . . . he even wrote a book enumerating the various drinks of the Kingdom—one of the first Bartenders' Manuals . . . his works are full of anagrams, and of low puns on words; and abound in a general, lusty ale-house facetiousness. . . .

But in all his mass and lumber of ready rhyme, you will come upon occasional passages that spring out to the eye like a branch in flower, vivid with the colour of a fresh Chaucerian quality.

And there are his high-sounding dedications, not to be overlooked: one of his pamphlets he dedicates to The World; another, to God—and, as if that did not swing an inclusive enough compass—to Christ in conjunction with the Deity!

One of Taylor's sayings—

I think it good plain English, without fraud,
To call a spade a spade, a bawd a bawd.

THE BEGGAR, EVERY WAY ADAM'S SON

A beggar every way is Adam's son,
For in a garden Adam first begun:
And so a beggar even from his birth
Doth make his garden the whole entire earth.
The earth embroidered with the various hue
Of Green, Red, Yellow, Purple, Watchet, Blue,
Carnation, Crimson, Damask, Spotless White,

And every colour that may please the sight.
The odoriferous Mint, the Eglantine,
The Woodbine, Primrose, and the Cowslip fine,
The Honeysuckle, and the Daffydill,
The fragrant Thyme, delights the beggar still.
His music waits on him in every bush,
The Mavis, Bullfinch, Blackbird, and the Thrush:
The Mountain Lark sings in the lofty sky,
And Robin Redbreast makes him melody,
The chirping Sparrow and the Chattering Pye,
My neighbour Cuckoo, always in one tune,
Sings like a townsman still in May and June.
These feathered fiddlers sing and dance and play,
The beggar takes delight and God doth pay.

THE PAINFUL PLOWMAN

The painful plowman's pains do never cease,
For he must pay his rent, or lose his lease,
And though his father and himself before
Have oft relieved the beggar at their door,
Yet now his Fine and Rent so high is reared,
That his own meat and clothes are scarcely cleared.
Let him toil night and day, in light and dark,
Lie with the lamb down, get up with the lark,
Dig, delve, plow, sow, rake, harrow, mow, lop, fell,
Plant, graft, hedge, ditch, thresh, winnow, buy and sell,
Yet all the money that his pains can win,
His landlord hath a purse to put it in.

DOWN A MINE

—a long mile thus I passed. . . .
Whilst o'er my head (in fourfold stories high)
Was earth, and sea, and air, and sun, and sky:

That, had I died in that Cimmerian room,
Four elements had covered o'er my tomb:
Thus further at the bottom did I go
(And many Englishmen have done not so)
Where mounting porpoises and mountain whales
And regiments of fish with fins and scales
'Twixt me and heaven did freely glide and slide,
And where great ships may at an anchor ride.

LODGING A-FIELD, WITH SUNDRY AND DIVERS
COMPANIONS

In heaven's star-chamber I did lodge that night,
Ten thousand stars me to my bed did light;
There my bed-fellows and companions were
My man, my horse, a bull, four cows, two steer!



SIR JOHN BEAUMONT

1582-1628

THE ELDER brother of the Francis Beaumont who collaborated with Fletcher on the famous series of plays.

His poetic remains are comprised in a small volume of various pieces, the longest being a poem on the battle of Bosworth Field. There is, besides this volume, a poem in eight books that he wrote, entitled "The Crown of Thorns"—no longer extant.

Sir John's poetry is "by no means destitute of literary merit; but his estimable little volume has a farther, and, for those times, a far more uncommon recommendation, in being wholly free from indelicate terms or allusions, and dedicated in every part to the service of virtue and piety."

"No less than seven writers of verse of the Beaumont family are known to readers of English poetry."

GOD HATH CREATED NIGHTS AS WELL AS DAYS

If solid virtues dwell not but in pain,
I will not wish the golden age again,
Because it flowed with sensible delights
Of heavenly things: God hath created nights
As well as days, to deck the varied globe;
Grace comes as oft clad in the dusky robe
Of desolation, as in white attire,
Which better fits the bright celestial quire.
Some in foul seasons perish through despair;
But more through boldness, when the days are fair.



LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY

1583-1648

A POET obsessed by the absolute beauty of the colour of utter blackness—

Blackness, a spark
Of light, inaccessible and alone.
That shining light in darkness all should find
Were they not upward-blind.
With the Sun-beams below.—

Baudelaire rejoiced in a negress as paramour. Lord Herbert did not carry his philosophy of blackness to this extreme, in love; though he sang of a mistress whom he styled “Melaina”—“she who is black.”

His inclination leaned entirely toward women brown-bodied, black-eyed and black-haired. . . .

He decries the blond type thus—

That whitely raw and unconcocted hue
Which beauty Northern Nations think the true.—

In praise of dark eyes—

It is because your beams are deep
And with your soul united keep.—

Black hair to him is “beamy.”

He extends his “conceit” of Blackness to all human existence—

Our life is but a dark and stormy night,
To which sense yields a weak and glimmering light,
While wandering Man thinks he discerneth all
By that which makes him but mistake and fall.
He sees enough who doth his darkness see.—

Death was to Lord Herbert a correlative fact of Blackness, and was much cherished in thought and meditated upon, by him . . . strangely enough, death was female—"my life's mistress"—"Great Mistress, whom my soul admires" . . . beautiful and terrible she was . . . Semiramis-like, leading an army of invasive, overwhelming worms, writhing forward, great and small, against mankind.

Once, personifying Death as masculine, in frightful imagery—

Methinks Death like one laughing lies
Showing his teeth, shutting his eyes.—

Cherbury was a man of the world, philosopher, politician. He left an interesting autobiography. "Never since Jerome Cardan laid bare for the world's inspection the innermost secrets of his being, never since Cellini told the story of his strange vicissitudes, never since Montaigne took Europe into his confidence, had such a record . . . been committed to paper."

Herbert is a minor poet of the metaphysical school, a follower of Dr. Donne.

His poem "To Black Itself" is supposed to contain the germ of the idea embodied in Blanco White's famous sonnet.

He often strongly reminds us of Browning; he put in use the metre afterward employed by Tennyson in "In Memoriam," with touches of complete sweetness and well-knit beauty.

THUS ENDS MY LOVE

Thus ends my Love, but this doth grieve me most
That so it ends; but that ends too; this yet,
Beside the wishes, hopes and times I lost,
Troubles my mind awhile, that I am set
Free, worse than denied: I can neither boast
Choice nor success, as my case is, nor get
Pardon from myself, that I loved not
A better mistress, or her worse. This debt
Only's her due, still that she be forgot
Ere changed, lest I love none; this done, the taint
Of foul inconstancy is cleared at least
In me; there only rests but to unpaint
Her form in my mind, that so dispossessed,
It be a temple, but without a saint. . . .

This is Browning, to the very echo!

O, NO, BELOV'D

O, no, Belov'd, I am most sure
Those virtuous habits we acquire
As being with the soul entire
Must with it evermore endure . . .

Else should our souls in vain elect,
And vainer yet were Heaven's laws,
When to an everlasting Cause
They gave a perishing effect.

Nor here on earth then, nor above,
Our good affection can impair,
For where God doth admit the fair
Think you that he excludeth Love? . . .

And if ev'ry imperfect mind
Make love the end of knowledge here,

How perfect will our love be, where
All imperfection is refined!

Let then no doubt, Celinda, touch,
Much less your fairest mind invade:
Were not our souls immortal made,
Our equal loves would make them such.

There, but for several intervening centuries, goes authentic Tennyson!

TO BLACK ITSELF

Thou Black wherein all colours are composed,
And unto which they all at last return;
Thou colour of the Sun where it doth burn,
And shadow, where it cools; in thee is closed
Whatever nature can, or hath disposed
In any other here; from thee do rise
Those tempers and complexions which disclosed
As parts of thee, do work as mysteries
Of that thy hidden power; when thou dost reign
The characters of fate shine in the skies,
And tell us what the Heavens do ordain:
But when Earth's common light shines in our eyes
Thou so retirest thyself, that thy disdain
All revelation unto man denies.

—Blanco White's sonnet, for purposes of comparison—

TO NIGHT

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,

Bathed in the rays of the great, setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! Creation widened in Man's view!

Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O sun! or who could find
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind!
Why do we then shun death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive,—wherefore not Life?



WILLIAM BROWNE

1588-1643(?)

WILLIAM BROWNE of Tavistock was a retainer of the Pembrokes, and, what with their faithful patronage and that of the Dormers', together with, later, a substantial dowry brought him by his second wife, this poet escaped the extreme grinding poverty so often the singer's lot.

Browne's marriage to his first wife was of the heart, which the sincere power of the following epitaph indicates—

May! be thou never graced with birds that sing,
Nor Flora's pride!
In thee all flowers and roses spring,
Mine only died!—

In his subsequent marriage, policy intervened. He courted his second wife, who was somewhat above his station in life, thirteen years, before he won her.

Lady Eversfield, his wife's mother, remained obdurate, and resentful of this marriage. She shows this resentment in her last will and testament, in which she bequeathes "to my daughter Browne, *for remembrance, to whom I have already given a portion, more now*, twenty shilling to make her a ring to wear for my sake, and my seal ring, and my velvet gown and white petticoat, my gold coif and cross-cloth to it"—the stern old lady adding, "*I owe my son Browne not one farthing of my daughter's portion for use or principal.*"

The bulk of Browne's poetry was written in his youth, and early manhood; then the springs dried up. The cause of which was, I presume, his enjoyment of too easy and settled a position as a Dorking squire. For an easy, country-loving nature such as his, a secure existence was fatal to the Muse.

There is no portrait of the poet in existence.

He was described as "a great mind in a little body."

Browne's verse was one of the bad and unpruned influences to which Keats was susceptible during the "Endymion" period.

Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals" stray endlessly along devious paths of meaningless, silly allegory; he peoples British localities and landscapes with impossible gods, goddesses, shepherds, shepherdesses, fauns, nymphs, satyrs. Of the School of Spenser, he might have shown better taste had he followed Spenser's cue closer, and laid the scenes of his pastorals in some far land of enchantment.

Browne himself was under a bad influence,—that of Du Bartas. But, in spite of this, he reveals an intermittent richness and gemlike beauty in his over-fanciful work, rooted incongruously in solid British ground. The whole of "Britannia's Pastorals" is meaty with folklore, and it runs with the milk and honey of native proverbial expressions.

Browne was the author of the famous epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke, that has too long been attributed to Ben Jonson:

Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Fair and learned and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.—

There follows an execrable, over-strained stanza in Browne's worst manner,—rightly left off, when the epitaph is quoted—

Marble piles let no man raise
To her name: for after-days
Some kind woman born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.

Browne was Michael Drayton's intimate friend, and was affectionately called one of his "sons" by Ben Jonson.

Browne's sayings—

By utt'ring what thou know'st less glory's got
Than by concealing what thou knowest not.—

Time so provides
That Joy still goes on foot, and Sorrow rides.—

Still the loss is as the loser is.—

The following passage from the "Pastorals" probably suggested the marvellous lines descriptive of Madeline's undressing, in Keats' "St. Agnes' Eve"—

AND AS A LOVELY MAIDEN

And as a lovely maiden, pure and chaste,
With naked, iv'ry neck, and gown unlaced,
Within her chamber, when the day is fled,
Makes poor her garments to enrich her bed:
First, off she puts her lily-silken gown,
That shrieks for sorrow as she lays it down;

And with her arms graceth a waistcoat fine,
Embracing her as it would ne'er untwine.
Her flaxen hair, ensnaring all beholders,
She next permits to wave about her shoulders,
And though she cast it back, the silken slips
Still forward steal and hang upon her lips:
Whereat she sweetly angry, with her laces
Binds up the wanton locks in curious traces,
Whilst (twisting with her joints) each long hair lingers,
As loth to be enchained but with her fingers.
Then on her head a dressing like a crown;
Her breasts all bare, her kirtle slipping down,
And all things off (which rightly ever be
Called the foul-fair marks of our misery)
Except her last, which enviously doth seize her,
Lest any eye partake with it in pleasure,
Prepares for sweetest rest. . . .

'T IS A MAN

What's he born to be sick, so always dying,
That's guided by inevitable fate;
That comes in weeping, and that goes out crying;
Whose calendar of woes is still in date;
Whose life's a bubble, and in length a span;
A concert still in discords?—'Tis a man.

What's he, whose thoughts are still quelled in th' event,
Though ne'er so lawful, by an opposite,
Hath all things fleeting, nothing permanent,
And at his ears still wears a parasite;
Hath friends in wealth, or wealthy friends, who can
In want prove mere illusions?—'Tis a man.

What's he, that what he is not strives to seem;
That doth support an Atlas-weight of care;

That of an outward good doth best esteem,
And looketh not within how solid they are;
That doth not virtuous, but the richest scan,
Learning and worth by wealth?—It is a man.

What's that possessor, which of good makes bad;
And what is worst, makes choice still for the best;
That grieveth most to think of what he had,
And of his chiefest loss accounteth least;
That doth not what he ought, but what he can;
Whose fancy's ever boundless?—'Tis a man.

THOSE INNOCENT DAYS OF OLD

Happy ye days of old, when every waste
Was like a sanctuary to the chaste;
When incest, rapes, adulteries, were not known;
All pure as blossoms which are newly blown.
Maids were as free from spots, and soils within,
As most unblemished in the outer skin.
Men every plain and cottage did afford
As smooth in deeds as they were fair in word.
Maidens with men as sisters with their brothers,
And men with maids conversed as with their mothers;
Free from suspicion and the rage of blood.
Strife only reigned, for all strived to be good.
But then as little wrens but newly fledge,
First, by their nests hop up and down the hedge;
Then from one bough to bough gets up a tree:
His fellow noting his agility,
Thinks he as well may venture as the other,
So flushing from one spray unto another,
Gets to the top, and then emboldened flies,
Unto a height past ken of human eyes:
So time wrought worse, men first desired to talk;

Then came suspect; and then a private walk;
Then by consent appointed times of meeting,
Where most securely each might kiss his sweeting;
Lastly, with lusts their panting breasts so swell,
They came to—but to what I blush to tell.

SONG OF THE SIRENS

Steer hither, steer your wingéd pines,
All beaten mariners,
Here lie Love's undiscovered mines,
A prey to passengers;
Perfumes far sweeter than the best
Which make the Phoenix' urn and nest.
Fear not your ships,
Nor any to oppose you save our lips,
But come on shore,
Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more.

NIGHTMARE

Much like a man who dreaming in his sleep
That he is falling from some mountain steep
Into a soundless lake, about whose brim
A thousand crocodiles do wait for him,
And hangs but by one bough, and should that break
His life goes with it, yet to cry or speak,
Though fain he would, can move nor voice nor tongue—

THE STAG PURSUED

More had he spoke, but that a bugle shrill
Rung through the valley from the higher hill,
And as they turned them towards the heart'ning sound,
A gallant stag, as if he scorned the ground,
Came running with the wind, and bore his head

As he had been the king of forests bred.
Not swifter comes the messenger of heaven,
Or wingéd vessel with a full gale driven,
Nor the swift swallow flying near the ground,
By which the air's distemp'rature is found:
Nor Myrrha's course, nor Daphne's speedy flight,
Shunning the dalliance of the God of light,
Than seemed the stag, that had no sooner crossed them,
But in a trice their eyes as quickly lost him.

VARIETY

There is no season such delight can bring,
As summer, autumn, winter, and the spring.
Nor the best flower that doth on earth appear
Could by itself content us all the year.
The salmons, and some more as well as they,
Now love the freshet, and then love the sea.
The flitting fowls not in one coast do tarry,
But with the year their habitation vary.
What music is there in a shepherd's quill
(Played on by him that hath the greatest skill)
If but a stop or two thereon we spy?
Music is best in her variety.
So is discourse, so joys; and why not then
As well the lives and loves of gods, as men?

THE VESSEL OF MY MIND

As careful merchants do expecting stand,
After long time and merry gales of wind,
Upon the place where their brave ship must land:
So wait I for the vessel of my mind.

Upon a great adventure it is bound,
Whose safe return will valued be at more

Than all the wealthy prizes which have crowned
The golden wishes of an age before.

ON PHILARETE, DYING YOUNG

Whoever doth the period see
Of days by heaven forth plotted,
Dies full of age, as well as he
That had more years allotted. . . .
Is this to die? No: as a ship
Well built, with easy wind,
A lazy hulk doth far outstrip,
And soonest harbour find:
So Philarete fled,
Quick was his passage given,
When others must have longer time
To make them fit for heaven.

THE PLEASED LOVER

For her gait if she be walking,
Be she sitting I desire her
For her state's sake, and admire her
For her wit, if she be talking.
Gait and state and wit approve her;
For which all and each I love her.

Be she sullen, I commend her
For a modest. Be she merry,
For a kind one her prefer I.
Briefly everything doth lend her
So much grace and so approve her,
That for everything I love her.

IT HAPPENED LATELY AT A FAIR

It happened lately at a fair, or wake,
After a pot or two or such mistake,
Two iron-soléd clowns, and bacon-sided,
Grumbled: then left the forms which they bestrided,
And with their crab-tree cudgels, as appears,
Threshed, as they use, at one another's ears:
A neighbour near both to their house and drink,
Who, though he slept at sermons, could not wink
At this dissention, with a spirit bold
As was the ale that armed them, strong and old,
Stepped in and parted them; but Fortune's frown
Was such that there our neighbour was knocked down.
For they, to recompense his pains at full,
Since he had broke their quarrel, broke his skull.
People came in and raised him from his swound;
A chirurgeon then was called to search the wound,
Who opening it, more to endear his pains,
Cried out "Alas! look, you may see his brains!"
"Nay," quoth the wounded man, "I tell you free,
Good Mr. Surgeon, that can never be;
For I should ne'er have meddled with this brawl
If I had had but any brains at all."



HENRY KING

1592-1669

A POET and churchman, who, by an austere and honourable course, achieved the position of Bishop of Chichester.

"A man of mildness, unfeigned piety, and blameless life."

"He was the epitome of all virtues and generous nobleness."

In his portrait one observes the small, worn eyes of the student given to overmuch bookishness,—and a face seeming to be laid out on a large white ruff, like John the Baptist's head on the charger.

Henry King's father, a bishop before him, was zealot enough to persecute the last Smithfield Martyr . . . who, in turn, would have persecuted the Bishop as fanatically, had he instead been in power.

Though King followed in his father's ecclesiastic footsteps, he was a gentler and more tolerant man . . . not, however, lacking the gift of words with which to scourge an evil. . . .

His verse rose to its greatest vigour and force when tense at excoriating the excesses and abuses of the Puritans, by whom he was hunted out and driven from his Bishopric, till the Restoration brought him his honour and pristine situation again. For a space he relied on the charity of secret friends for bread in his mouth and a roof over his head from the weather.

King made no compromise with the Protector—instead,—dating it "from my sad retirement," he published a poetic

eulogy of Charles the First, in which he declared him "the world's only mirror," and, after the most extravagant praise, cried, that, if what he wrote were not true, he would still abide by it, and "Pay his last duty" to the executed monarch "with a glorious lie."

Three kingdoms' necks have felt the axe in thee—
A Prince so richly good, so blest a reign,
The world ne'er saw but once, nor shall again.—

The Puritans he addressed as—

Witches who their contracts have forsworn—and were
By their own devils into pieces torn—

Further assailing them as—

Scum drawn from the worst who never knew
The fruits which from ingenuous breeding grew—

All our thoughts of earth and frailty smell—sang Henry King—

Man is a stranger to himself, and knows
Nothing so naturally as his woes . . .
Man is a candle whose unhappy light
Burns in the day, but smothers in the night.

(Adding, in his devout trust of his religion):

God will restore those fallen lights again,
And kindle them to an eternal flame.—

Henry King shrank from the animal aspects of passion; even in marriage it was merely to be allowed: he advises men to contain themselves and wait—

Love's fruits are legal use, and therefore may
Be only taken on the marriage day.—

His advice is the advice of Saint Paul, "rather marry than burn."

Take a wife
A lawful help 'gainst lustful fires.—

"Illicit passion" he wholly condemned. Having taken to wife Anne Berkeley—and falling into a great love for her—despite himself he accepted an austere paganism; and when his young wife died—

More loved than health,
And dearer than the light.—

he sang of her body, the enjoyment of it remembered,—

My little world!.—

ardently looking forward to the resurrection of the Flesh in another life!

From his other verse it is plainly to be seen that, before he met and married Anne Berkeley, King tasted the bitterness of defeat, in the pursuit of the love of other women.

King's sayings—

Too much merit is not safe.—

Those two baits of profit and delight—

Was ever stomach that lacked meat

Nourished by what another eat?.—

Some . . . there be

So without cause afraid of novelty

They would not, were it in their power to choose,

AN OLD ILL PRACTICE FOR A BETTER LOSE.

ON THE LATE EARL OF ESSEX

Essex twice made unhappy by a wife,

Yet married worse unto the People's strife,

He who by two divorces did untie
His load of wedlock and of loyalty:
Who was by easiness of nature bred
To lead that Tumult which first him misled;
Yet had some glimmering sparks of virtue lent
To see, though late, his errors, and repent:
Essex in differing successes tried
The fury and the falsehood of each side. . . .
Essex lies here, like an inverted flame,
Hid in the ruins of his House and Name. . . .
He shows what wretched bubbles great men are,
Through their ambition grown too popular:
For they, built up, on weak opinion stand
On bases false as water, loose as sand.

A CONTEMPLATION UPON FLOWERS

Brave flowers, that I could gallant it like you!
And be as little vain!
You come abroad, and make a harmless show,
And to your beds of earth again!
You are not proud, you know your birth,
For your embroidered garments, are from earth.

You do obey your months and times, but I
Would ever have it Spring;
My fate would know no winter, never die
Nor think of such a thing;
Oh that I could my bed of earth but view
And smile, and look as cheerfully as you:

Oh teach me to see death, and not to fear
But rather to take truce;
How often have I seen you at a bier,
And there look fresh and spruce;

You fragrant flowers, then teach me that my breath
Like yours, may sweeten and perfume my death.

THE MAN SICK UNTO DEATH

His chamber seems a loose and trembling mine;
His pillow quilted with a porcupine:
Pain makes his downy couch sharp thorns appear,
And every feather prick him like a spear—
Poor walking clay! hast thou a mind to know
To what unblest beginnings thou dost owe
Thy wretched self? fall sick awhile and then
Thou wilt conceive the pedigree of Man!
Learn shalt thou from thine own anatomy
That earth his mother, worms his sisters be,—
That he's a short-lived vapour upward wrought,
And by corruption into nothing brought;
A tree which withers faster than it grows;
A torch puffed out by every flame that blows;
A web of forty weeks spun forth in pain,
And in a minute ravelled out again.

O, WHEREFORE IS THE MOST DISCERNING EYE?

O, wherefore is the most discerning eye
Unapt to make its own discovery?
Why is the clearest and best judging mind
In her own ill perceptions dark and blind?
Dull to advise, to act precipitate,
We scarce know what to do but when too late:
Still we repent and sin, sin and repent,
We thaw and freeze, we harden and relent;
Those fires which cooled today the morrow's heat
Rekindles. Thus frail nature does repeat
What she unlearnt, and still by learning on
Perfects her lesson of confusion!

PURSUE NO MORE, MY THOUGHTS

Pursue no more, my thoughts, that false Unkind,—
You may as soon imprison the North wind,
Or catch the lightning as it leaps, or reach
The leading billow first ran down the beach,
Or undertake the flying clouds to track
In the same path they yesterday did rack—
Henceforth thy tears shall be (though thou repent)
Like pardons after executions sent.
Nor shalt thou my love's story ever read
But as some epitaph of what is dead.

THE STEED THAT COMES TO UNDERSTAND

The Steed that comes to understand his strength
Grows wild, and casts his manager at length;
And that tame Lover who unlocks his heart
Unto his mistress, teaching her an art
To plague himself, shews her the secret way
How she may tyrannize another day!

THE TRUEST SORROW

Believe 't, that sorrow truest is which lies
Deep in the breast, not floating in the eyes;
And he with saddest circumstance doth part,
Who seals his farewell with a bleeding heart.

EASY PEOPLE

Easy people who their wish enjoy
Like prodigals at once their wealth destroy . . .
Yet will I not your levity accuse:
Continuance sometimes is the worst abuse.
In judgment I might rather hold it strange,
If like the fleeting world, you did not change:

Be it your wisdom therefore to retract,
When perseverance oft is folly's act. . . .
Farewell, fair shadow of a female faith,
And let this be our friendship's epitaph;
Affection shares the frailty of our fate,
When, like ourselves 'tis old and out of date:
'Tis just all human loves their period have
When friends are frail and dropping to the grave.

THEY WHOM THE RISING BLOOD TEMPTS NOT
They whom the rising blood tempts not to taste,
Preserve a stock of love can never waste . . .
Who then that 's wise or virtuous, would not fear
To catch at pleasures which forbidden were
When those which we count lawful, cannot be
Required without some loss of modesty?
Ev'n in the marriage bed, where soft delights
Are customary and authóriz'd rites;
What are those tributes to the wanton sense,
But tolerations of incontinence?
For properly you cannot call that love
Which does not from the soul but humour move.
Thus they who worshipped Pan or Isis' shrine,
By the fair front judg'd all within divine:
Though ent'ring, found 't was but a goat or cow
To which, before, their ignorance did bow.
Such temples and such goddesses are these
Which foolish lovers and admirers please;
Who, if they chance within the shrine to spy,
Find that a beast they thought a deity.

THE EXEQUY

(On the Death of a Beloved Wife)

Accept, thou shrine of my dead saint,
Instead of dirges this complaint;
And, for sweet flowers to crown thy hearse,
Receive a strew of weeping verse
From thy grieved friend, whom thou might'st see
Quite melted into tears for thee!
Dear loss! Since thy untimely fate,
My task hath been to meditate
On thee, on thee: thou art the book,
The library whereon I look,
Though almost blind; for thee, loved clay,
I languish out, not live the day,
Using no other exercise
But what I practise with mine eyes:
By which wet glasses I find out
How lazily Time creeps about
To one that mourns: this, only this
My exercise and business is:
So I compute the weary hours
With sighs dissolvéd into showers.
Thou hast benighted me: thy set
This eve of blackness did beget,
Who wast my day, (though overcast
Before thou hast thy noontide past),
And I remember must in tears,
Thou scarce hadst seen so many years
As days tell hours. By thy clear sun
My love and fortune first did run;
But thou wilt never more appear
Folded within my hemisphere,
Since both thy light and moti6n

Like a fled star is fall'n and gone.
I could allow thee for a time
To darken me and my sad clime;
Were it a month, a year, or ten,
I would thy exile live till then;
And all that space my mirth adjourn,
So thou wouldst promise to return,
And putting off thy ashy shroud
At length disperse this sorrow's cloud.
But, woe is me! the longest date
Too narrow is to calculate
These empty hopes: never shall I
Be so much blest as to descry
A glimpse of thee, till that day come
Which shall the earth to cinders doom,
And a fierce fever must calcine
The body of this world like thine,
(My little world!) That fit of fire
Once off, our bodies shall aspire
To our soul's bliss; then we shall rise,
And view ourselves with clearer eyes
In that calm region, where no night
Can hide us from each other's sight.
Meantime thou hast her, Earth: much good
May my harm do thee, since it stood
With Heaven's will I might not call
Her longer mine, I give thee all
My short-lived right and interest
In her, whom living I loved best.
Be kind to her; and, prithee, look
Thou write into thy doomsday book
Each parcel of this rarity
Which in thy casket shrined doth lie:
See that thou make thy reckoning straight,

And yield her back again by weight;
For thou must audit on thy trust
Each grain and atom of this dust,
As thou wilt answer him that lent—
Not gave thee—my dear monument.

Sleep on, my love, in thy cold bed
Never to be disquieted!
My last good night! thou wilt not wake
Till I thy fate shall overtake:
Till age, or grief, or sickness must
Marry my body to that dust
It so much loves; and fill the room
My heart keeps empty in thy tomb.
Stay for me there; I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.
And think not much of my delay,
I am already on the way,
And follow thee with all the speed
Desire can make, or sorrows breed.
Each minute is a short degree,
And every hour a step towards thee.
At night when I betake to rest,
Next morn I rise nearer my west
Of life, almost by eight hours' sail,
Than when sleep breathed his downy gale.
Thus from the sun my bottom steers
And my day's compass downward bears:
Nor labour I to stem the tide
Through which to thee I swiftly glide.
'T is true, with shame and grief I yield,
Thou like the van first took'st the field,
And gotten hast the victory
In thus adventuring to die

Before me, whose more years might crave
A just precedence in the grave.
But hark! my pulse, like a soft drum,
Beats my approach, tells thee I come;
And slow howe'er my marches be,
I shall at last sit down by thee.
The thought of this bids me go on,
And wait my dissolution
With hope and comfort: Dear, (forgive
The crime), I am content to live
Divided, with but half a heart,
Till we shall meet and never part.



JOHN DAY

1574-1640

"DAY, ONE of the poets of James the First's reign, was the author of 'The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green,' 'The Isle of Gulls,' and several other dramas. There is great breadth and vigour in the style of this writer: his lines occupy a middle place between the antique grandeur of Marlowe, and Dryden's nervous but finished couplets."

MAN'S NATURAL INFIRMITY

What means my God? Why dost present to me
Such glorious objects? Can a blind man see?
Why dost thou call? Why dost thou beckon so?
Wouldst have me come? Lord, can a cripple go?
Or why dost thou expect that I should raise
Thy glory with my voice? the dumb can't praise.
Unscale my dusky eyes; then I'll express
Thy glorious object's strong attractiveness:
Dip thou my limbs in thy Bethesda's lake—
I'll scorn my earthly crutches; I'll forsake
Myself: touch thou my tongue, and then I'll sing
An hallelujah to my glorious King:
Raise me from this my grave—then I shall be
Alive, and I'll bestow my life on thee.
Till thou, Elijah-like, dost overspread
My limbs, I'm blind, I'm lame, I'm dumb—I'm dead!



FRANCIS QUARLES

1542-1644

THOUGH a Royalist; in a religious sense, the gloomiest of the Puritan poets. His portrait shows a pained, fat face, a brief, flaring moustache, an Imperial flanging down over a chin that runs to doubleness. The eyes seem either in puzzlement trying to adjust themselves to some far focal point, or else there is a slight cast in them.

What we see here is but a graven face,
Only the shadow of that brittle case
Wherein are treasured up those gems which he
Hath left behind him to posterity.
(The legend beneath the portrait.)

Quarles' "education was of the Universities and Inns of Court, but his inclination was rather to divine studies than the law." He became one of the great Lay Teachers of the Church of England. He held several official positions, being at one time Cupbearer to the Queen of Bohemia, at another, secretary to the Lord Primate of Ireland. He fulfilled till his decease, the office of Chronologer to the City of London.

After his death, his wife wrote "a short relation of the life and death of Mr. Francis Quarles, by Ursula Quarles, his sorrowful widow." In this curious, prideful sketch of her husband she writes, "He was the husband of one wife by whom he was the father of eighteen children. And how

faithful and loving a husband and father he was, the joint tears of his widow and fatherless children will better express than my pen is able to do. . . .

"His motto was, 'My God first, my King and Country second, my Family last. . . .

"He was not addicted to any notorious vice whatsoever. He was courteous and affable to all: moderate and discreet in all his actions: and though it be too frequent a fault (as we see by experience) in gentlemen whose dispositions incline them to the study of poetry, to be loose and debauched in their habits and conversations, yet it was very far from him. . . .

"Their delight could not be greater in the Tavern than his was in his study,—to which he devoted himself late and early, usually by three o'clock in the morning. . . .

"In his last illness he admitted no pain, thanked God for punishing him, expressed great sorrow for his sins. . . .

"He took sick of a hurt when a petition full of unjust aspersions was presented against him by eight men. But would not have the leader punished when he was in likelihood of it."

Another writer further explains the circumstances of his last illness and death,—

"In the time of the Civil War, a petition full of unjust accusations was preferred against this worthy man by eight persons of whom he knew only two, but by sight; the news of this had such an effect upon him that he declared it would be his death, which happened soon after, according to his predictions" . . .

His widow, Ursula, reported, with unction, that "he would not allow a Doctor to prescribe for him because he was of the Romish religion." . . .

How black and dismal a piety surrounded the Good Man's life as told in Quarles' own verse—

I long to taste, yet there was nothing did
Move my desire, but that I was forbid!—

He saw,

A brimstone sea of boiling fire,
And fiends with knotted whips of flaming wire.—

Thoreau was taken by certain qualities in Quarles' verse, and read all of his verse and prose; remarking of him that he was "hopelessly quaint, as if he lived all alone and knew nobody but his wife, who appears to have revered him. He never doubts his genius; it is only he and his God in all the world."

The book that won him popularity and a kind of fame was *Emblems*. The verse was original, but the woodcuts around which the verse was written were taken entirely from the woodcuts in the book of Latin elegies, by Hermanus Hugo . . . which Hugo himself purloined from Alciat, the Milanese lawyer!

Browning called the *Emblems*—"my childhood's best book." To my mind there could be a no more horrible book for anyone's childhood . . . a ghastly, sorrowing work, reeking with gloom and "stinking of mortality." Browning should have derived a better benefit from perusing Quarles if he had but followed the advice given in one of the prefaces of the latter—"I have not affected to set the understanding on the rack, by the tyranny of strong lines, which (as they fabulously report of China dishes) are made for the third generation to make use of, and are the mere itch of wit."

Quarles called his *Emblems* his "visible poetry," and the courageous but spiteful Pope wrote of them—

"Where the pictures for the page atone,
And Quarles is saved by beauties not his own."

An unfair and waspish criticism—for it is the pictures which are crude and dull, while the verse is at times shot through with vivid lightning against its black cloud of theological pessimism . . . poetic lightning laces the night of his religious gloom with rapid webs of gold. . . .

Fuller, in his "Worthies of England," credits more justly the vivid qualities of Quarles,

"His verses on Job are done to the life, so that the reader may see the sores."

Quarles is quite capable of such amazing infelicities as—

All you whose dear affections have been tossed
In Cupid's blanket.—

and—

Weeping carnation tears.—

as an alternative for

"Weeping tears of blood."

On the other hand, his hand has the quaint touch of—

The owl, the feathered bellman of the night,—

and he does not lack fine felicities like (The Soul is speaking to Christ, apologizing for its sluggish):

Canst thou forget the drowsy mount wherein
Thy dull disciples slept?—

And—

An unrequested star did gently slide,
Before the wise men, to a greater light.—

And—

A poor, unhappy wretch, the very scorn
Of all prosperity.—

And that beautiful but unconsciously quite wicked arraignment of the deity,—

Why dost thou wound the already wounded breast?
Ah me! my life is but a pain at best:
I am but dying dust: my day's a span,
What pleasure tak'st thou in the blood of man?
Spare, spare thy scourge, and be not so austere,
Send fewer strokes, or lend more strength to bear.—

And—

Death, great enemy, whose kingdom 's in the dust.—
and, of the Judgment,—

Hills forego their ponderous bulk and fly
Like wandering atoms, in the empty sky.—

In his longer poem, the love-tragedy of "Agalus and Parthenia,"—

"A scion out of the orchard of Sir Philip Sidney of precious memory"—

—there is some fine poetry to be found, especially in the middle part of it.

The following lines would remind one of the famous lines in Omar Khayyam wherein the creator is likened to a potter, if the comparison were not common to all literatures:

Eternal Potter, whose blest hands did lay
My coarse foundation from a sod of clay,
Thou know'st my slender vessel apt to leak;
Thou know'st my brittle temper 's prone to break:
Are my bones basil, or my flesh of oak?
O mend what thou hast made, what I have broke:
Look, look with gentle eyes, and in the day
Of vengeance, Lord, remember I am clay.—

Quarles' Sayings:

Good declined turns bad, turns worst of all.—
A gamester may not choose his chance.—



THE SOUL ATTEMPTING ESCAPE
FROM THE BODY

Harm only falls on such as fear a harm.—
Wealth, the golden cover of all faults.—
Heavy-heeled delay
The dull-browed pander of despair.—
The event still crowns the act: let no man say
Before the evening's come, 't is a fair day.—
An easy good brings easy gains;
But things of price are bought with pains.—
The pleasing way is not the right:
He that would conquer heaven must fight.—
He never yet stood sure, that stands secure.—
Heaven's never deaf, but when man's heart is dumb.—
Man, that proud inch of living earth.—
Who acts the King today, by chance of lot
Perchance tomorrow begs, and blushes not.—
He needs not fear
To lose the road, that goes he knows not where.—
The popular ear
Weighs what you are, not what you were.—
The first degree to do is only to desire.—
The hindmost hound oft takes the doubling hare.

IF I HAVE LOST MY PATH

If I have lost my path, great Shepherd, say,
Shall I still wander in a doubtful way?
Lord, shall a lamb of Israel's sheepfold stray?
Thou art the pilgrim's path, the blind man's eye,
The dead man's life: on thee my hopes rely;
If thou remove, I err, I grope, I die.
Disclose thy sunbeams, close thy wings, and stay;
See, see how I am blind, and dead, and stray,
O thou who art my light, my life, my way!

GOD, HIS FORTRESS

Great God! there is no safety here below;
Thou art my fortress, thou that seem'st my foe:
'T is thou, that strik'st the stroke, must guard the blow . . .
I know thy justice is thyself, I know,
Just God, thy very self is mercy too;
If not to thee, where, whither, shall I go?—
Then work thy will; if passion bid me flee,
My reason shall obey: my wings shall be
Stretched out no further than from thee to thee.

WHAT SULLEN STAR—

What sullen star ruled my untimely birth,
That would not lend my days one hour of mirth—
The smiling flower salutes the day; it grows
Untouched with care, it neither spins nor sows:
O, that my tedious life were like this flower,
Or freed from grief, or finished in an hour.

THE BRANDED SLAVE

The branded slave that tugs the weary oar
Obtains the sabbath of a welcome shore:
His ransomed stripes are healed; his native soil
Sweetens the memory of his foreign toil,
But ah! my sorrows are not half so blest;
My labour finds no point, my pains, no rest.

IF HEROD HAD BUT SEEN THE BABE

What savage tyrant can behold
The beauty of so sweet a face as this is
And not himself be by himself controlled
And change his fury to a thousand kisses.

A LOVE-DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE SOUL

Christ

Come, come, my dear, and let us both retire,
And whiff the dainties of the fragrant field
Where warbling philomel and shrill-mouthed choir
Chant forth their raptures; where the turtle builds
Her lovely nest; and where the new-born brier
Breathes forth the sweetness that her April yields:
Come, come, my lovely fair, and let us try
These rural delicacies, where thou and I
May melt in private flames, and fear no stander-by.

Soul

My heart's eternal joy, in lieu of whom
The earth's a blast, and all the world's a bubble;
Our city mansion is the fairest home,
But country sweets are tinged with lesser trouble;
Let's try them both, and choose the better; come;
A change in pleasure makes the pleasure double;
On thy commands depends my go or tarry,
I'll stir with Martha, or I'll stay with Mary:
Our hearts are firmly fixed, our pleasures vary.

Christ

Our country mansion (situate on high),
With various objects still renews delight:
Her arched roof's of unstained ivory;
Her walls of fiery-sparkling chrysolite;
Her pavement is of hardest porphyry;
Her spacious windows are all glazed with bright
And flaming carbuncles; no need require
Titan's faint rays, or Vulcan's feeble fire;
And every gate's a pearl; and every pearl entire.

Soul

Fool that I was! how were my thoughts deceived!
How falsely was my fond conceit possessed!

I took it for an hermitage, but paved
And daubed with neighbouring dirt, and thatched at
best.

Alas! I ne'er expected more, nor craved;
A turtle hoped but for a turtle's nest:
Come, come, my dear, and let no idle stay
Neglect the advantage of the headstrong day;
How pleasure grates, that feels the curb of dull delay!

Christ

Come, then, my joy, let our divided paces
Conduct us to our fairest territory;
O, there we 'll twine our souls in sweet embraces:

Soul

And in thine arms I 'll tell my passion's story.

Christ

O, there I 'll crown thy head with all my graces;

Soul

And all these graces shall reflect thy glory:

Christ

O, there I 'll feed thee with celestial manna;
I'll be thy Elkanah.

Soul

And I thy Hanna.

Christ

I 'll sound my trump of joy.

Soul

And I 'll resound Hosanna!

THE IDLE VAGRANT

—The Idle Vagrant

That boldly 'dopts each house he views, his own;
Makes every purse his 'chequer, and, at pleasure,
Walks forth, and taxes all the world like Cæsar.

VENUS, TO CUPID WEeping

What means my peevish babe? wish, lullaby!
What ails my babe, what ails my babe to cry?
Will nothing still it? Will it neither be
Pleased with the nurse's breast, nor mother's knee?
What ails my bird? What moves my froward boy
To make such whim'ring faces? Peace, my joy:
Will nothing do? Come, come, this peevish brat!
—Thus cry and bawl, and cannot tell for what? . . .
Peace, peace, my dear; alas! thy early years
Had never fault to merit half these tears;
Come smile upon me—let thy mother spy
Thy father's image in her baby's eye:
Thine eye 's not ripe for tears; wish, lullaby!
What ails my babe, my sweet-faced babe, to cry?
Look, look what 's here? A dainty, golden thing:
See how the dancing bells turn round and ring,
To please my bantling! Here 's a knack will breed
An hundred kisses: here 's a knack indeed . . .
Here 's right the father's smile; when Mars beguiled
Sick Venus of her heart, just thus he smiled.

SHE IS A WOMAN

She is a woman, if a woman, then
My title 's good: women were made for men.
She is a woman, though her heavenly brow
Writ angel,—and may stoop, although not now.
Women by looks will not be understood
Until their hearts advise with flesh and blood.
She is a woman, there 's no reason why,
But she (perchance) may burn as well as I . . .
'T is half-perfected what is once begun;
She is a woman, and she must be won.

“She ’s beautiful, and therefore to be wooed,
She is a woman, therefore to be won.”

These lines of Shakespeare must have been in the mind of
Quarles, when he wrote the foregoing.

SAIL, GENTLE PINNACE

Sail, gentle pinnace: now the heavens are clear,
The winds blow fair—behold the harbour ’s near,
Tridented Neptune hath forgot to frown,
The rocks are past: the storm is over-blown.
Up, weather-beaten voyagers, and rouse ye,
Forsake your loathéd cabins . . .
Upon the open decks! and smell the land,
Cheer up! the welcome shore is nigh at hand!

ALAS, WHEN LOVERS LINGER

Alas, when lovers linger and out-go
Their promised date, they know not what they do:
Men fondly say, that women are too fond
At parting; to require so strict a bond
For quick return: poor fools! ’T is they endure
Oft-times the danger of the forfeiture:
I blame them not: for mischief still attends
Upon the too-long absence of two friends.

A SONG OF WELL-WISHING TO A BRIDE

Let all thy joys be as the month of May,
And all thy days be as a marriage day:
Let sorrow, sickness, and a troubled mind
Be stranger to thee, let them never find
Thy heart at home: let Fortune still allot
Such lawless guests to those that love thee not:
And let those blessings, which shall wanting be
To such as merit none, alight on thee!

LOVER'S PARTING

He speaks; she answers; he, a-fresh, replies;
He stoutly sues; as stoutly she denies.
He begs in vain; and she denies in vain:
For she denies again: he begs again.
At last, both weary, he his suit adjourns;
For lovers' days are good and bad by turns;
He bids farewell; as if the heart of either
Gave but one motion, they both sighed together.
She bids farewell; and yet she bids it so,
As if her farewell ended, if he go;
He bids farewell; but so, as if delay
Had promised better farewells to his stay.
She bids farewell, but holds his hand so fast
As if that farewell had not been the last.
Both sighed, both wept, and both, being heavy-hearted,—
She bids farewell, he bids farewell and parted!

INVOCATION, FOR THE MORN OF THE WEDDING DAY

Up, Argalus, and don thy nuptial weeds,
'T enjoy that joy from whence all joy proceeds:
Enter those joys, from whence all joy proceeds:
Up, Argalus, and don thy nuptial weeds.

And thou, fair bride, more beauteous than the day,—
Thy day is come, and Hymen calls away;
Awake, and rouse thee from thy downy slumber:
Thy day is come: O may thy joys out-number
Thy minutes that are past, and do ensue;
Arise, and bid thy maiden bed adieu;
Put on thy nuptial robes, time calls away;
O may thy after-days be like this day!

HE WAS A GENTLEMAN

He was a gentleman whom vain ambition
Ne'er taught to undervalue the condition
Of private gentry; who preferred the love
Of his respected neighbours far above
The apish congees of th' inconstant court:
Ambitious of a good, not great report:
Belovéd of his Prince, yet not depending
Upon his favours so as to be tending
Upon his person: and, in brief, too strong
Within himself, for fortune's hand to wrong.



SHAKERLEY MARMION

1622-1639

“ADVANCE your pike; shoulder your pike; level your pike; slope your pike; cheek your pike; trail your pike—” ran the manual of arms, known to the English soldiers who fortuneed it in the Low Countries.

I suppose they “trailed their pikes” when on the march; hence the phrase equivalent to enlisting as a soldier. Gascoigne and Churchyard, both doughtily “trailed pikes” in the wars in the Netherlands. . . .

Shakerley was of the same company of warrior-poets . . . was as rascally . . . and as poverty-ridden . . .

He came of an ancient and noble family.

His father, lord of the manor of Aynho in Northamptonshire, showed no desire to conserve his worldly means for his descendants,—for he sold his property to one Richard Cartwright of the Inner Temple.

His son, the poet, “was a goodly, proper gentleman, and had in his possession several hundred pounds per annum at least, but died (as the curse is incident to all poets) poor and in debt,” says Anthony à Wood.

It was when Shakerley ran through his “several hundred pounds per annum” that he was driven to “trail the pike” in the Low Countries.

Returning to England, and turning unsatisfactorily to the pen for support, despite the fact that he was “cried up for a noted poet and copious writer of English Comedy”—Marmion despairingly fell into ways of ill-repute and be-

came one of the breed of poets that Bishop Prat exclaimed against in his eulogy of Abraham Cowley . . . and the good widow Quarles in her husband's "life."

Marmion "lived riotously and was familiar with the disreputable sides of London life." A true bill was returned against him for his "having stabbed with a sword, one Edward More on the highway of St. Giles-in-the-fields, but he seems to have escaped and joined his friend, Sir John Suckling, who received him in a troop of horse," in the cavalier poet's disastrous expedition against the Scotch Covenanters. . . .

But Marmion, in his journey norward with the troop, "was seized at York with a complaint which prevented his proceeding further, being by the care of his friend Suckling removed by easy stages to London." He died there at the beginning of the year 1639.

"Thou hadst a pen
From love's own wing."

wrote Richard Broome

"Ben Jonson patronized him and he became one of his 'sons'."

Marmion's long narrative poem—"Cupid and Psyche"—is a poem written in advance of its time: it antedates Keats in its "Keatsian" verbal felicity and richness; and Keats took hints from it, as I shall show; and Pope, too, in at least one instance.

Marmion's style was concrete and pregnant; vividly and particularistically descriptive: *e.g.*

Of Cupid's arrows one—
'T was the best
Of all the bundle, and the curiosest;
The plumes were coloured azure; white and red,

The shaft, painted alike down to the head,
Which was of burnished gold.—

The narrative, especially the earlier part of it, moves in
a straight, singing arrow of description—

—a huge venomed serpent that does fly
With speckled wings, above the starry sky
And down again.—

He gives new substance to old deities as did Keats.

Marmion's sayings:

—All (though to their cost)
Desire forbidden things, but women most.—
Care is beauty's thief.—
Cupid . . . whose humour is to strive,
Then yield, then stay, and play the fugitive.—
Fools will chafe
At that which makes a wise man laugh.—
A cheerful but an upright heart
Is music wheresoe'er thou art.

DESCRIPTION OF PSYCHE

Of Psyche, Cupid's love-to-be, he writes—in contradis-
tinction to her two sisters, as well as to the rest of the female
population of Greece—

—The younger had no parallel;
Whose lovely cheeks with heavenly lustre shone,
And eyes were far too bright to look upon. . . .
Look how the spiced fields in Autumn smell,
And rich perfumes that in Arabia dwell;
Such was her fragrant sweetness. The sun's bird,
The Phoenix, fled far off and was afear'd

To be seen near, lest she his pride should quell,
Or make him seem a common spectacle.
Nor did the painted peacock once presume
Within her presence to display his plume.
Nor rose nor lily durst their silks unfold,
But shut their leaves up like the marigold.
They all had been ill-favoured, she alone
Was judged the mistress of perfection!

Cupid, the Son of Venus (who, in his mother's despite, fell in love with Psyche—she being angry because the latter's beauty was equalled, in human mouths, with hers).

CUPID'S CHARACTER

Her rash and wingéd child,
Arméd with bow, torch, quiver; that is wild
With mischief, he that with his evil ways
Corrupts all public discipline, and strays
Through chambers in the night, and with false beams,
Or with his stinging arrows, or with dreams,
Tempts unto lust, and does no good at all.

ZEPHYR WAFTS PSYCHE

(Cupid missioning him to bring the girl to his palace.)

—A gentle gale of wind came posting on,
Who with his whispers having charmed her fears,
The maid asleep in his soft bosom bears.
This wind is calléd Zephyrus, whose mild
And fruitful birth gets the young Spring with child,
Filling her womb with such delicious heat,
As breeds the blooming rose and violet.
Him Cupid for this delicacy chose,
And did this amorous task on him impose,

To fetch his mistress; but lest he should burn
With beauty's fire, he bade him soon return,—
But all in vain, for promises are frail,
And virtue flies when love once blows the sail;
For as she slept he lingered on his way,
And oft embraced, and kissed her as his prey,
And gazed to see how far she did surpass
Erictheus' daughter, wife to Boreas,
Fair Orythia,—and as she began
To wax hot through his motion, he would fan
And cool her with his wings, which did disperse
A perfumed scent through all the universe.

THE HOUSE OF CUPID

The roof within was curiously o'erspread
With ivory and gold enamelléd,
The gold was burnished, glistening like a flame,
And golden pillars did support the same;
The walls were all with silver wainscot lined,
With several beasts and pictures there enshrined;
The floor and pavement with like glory shone,
Cut in rare figures made of precious stone,
That though the sun should hide his light away,
You might behold the house through its own day.

Did not Keats take the hint of this, for his description of the palace that Lamia built by magic, for Lycius? And, for the "unseen voices" that served her, have we not imaginative warrant from the following from Marmion?

PSYCHE'S SERVANTS

She only heard voices attending there,
That said "Fair mistress, why are you afraid?
All these are yours, and we to do you aid.

Come up into the rooms, where shall be shown
Chambers all ready furnished, all your own:
From thence descend and take the spiced air,
Or from your bath unto your bed repair,
Whilst each of us that Echo represents,
Devoid of all corporeal instruments,
Shall wait your minister."

Keats, in "*The Eve of Saint Agnes*," has Porphyro, stolen into Madeline's bed-chamber, heap fruits before her quite causelessly

"These delicacies he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver . . . he took up her hollow lute,
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tender be,
He played an ancient ditty long since mute."

Marmion—for Psyche's banquet,—

A GOLDEN DISH WAS BROUGHT
When straight a mighty golden dish was brought
Replete with all the dainties can be thought;
The banquet ended, there was heard on high
A consort of celestial harmony,
And music mixed with sounds articulate,
That Phœbus' self might strive to emulate.

CUPID'S LOVE-VISITATION TO PSYCHE
—And now the noon
Of night began t' approach, and the pale moon
And her weak beams,—and sleep had seized all eyes,
But lovers', vexed with fears and jealousies—
She must a hundred terrors entertain

And more and greater her amazements were,
Because she knew not what she was to fear . . .
For drawing near, he sat upon her bed,
Then laid his gentle hand upon her head,
And next embraced, and kissed, and did embrue
Her balmy lips with a delicious dew.*

But, in her palace, where her strange lover comes to her
in the unseen dark, Psyche becomes sick for mortal companionship, crying—

“O let me see my sisters or I die!”

And Zephyrus is sent by Cupid to bring her sisters to her:

Both safe in presence of his wife, in pain
To be in prison and strict durance bound,
With the earth's weighty fetters, underground,
And a huge mountain to be laid upon
His aery back.

Her two wondering sisters arrived, they find that Psyche
—Has all ready, for to come and go,
Voices her handmaids, and the winds, 't is so;
She bore herself with no less majesty,
And breathed out nothing but divinity.—

They are by Psyche—

—To a fair chamber led
Where with celestial dainties she them fed.§
She speaks but to the lute, and straight it hears; †
She calls for raptures, and they swell her ears.
All sorts of music sound, with many a lay,
Yet none was present seen, to sing or play.

* Porphyro kisses Madeline and so wakes her, in “St. Agnes’ Eve.”

§ Keats says “spiced dainties.”

† And here we have the lute of Porphyro.

Her sisters, amazed, and jealous of such opulence (whereas *they* have married but mortals), persuade Psyche that all may not be what it seems—that her mysterious spouse might be a monstrous thing, coming to her nightly with “a serpent’s crawling footsteps on the ground.” Keats’ Lamia was of course a serpent. Perhaps the later poet derived his idea hence, as well as from that passage in Burton’s Anatomy. They spoke loathingly of her being—

“Stewed

In the rank lust of a lascivious worm.”

The two sisters here serve the place of the philosopher Apollonius, in Keats’ poem.

They say—with an apt hint for Keats,—

“WISE MEN have their ways and eyes still clear,
And leave no mists of danger nor of fear.”

They advise (note the definite metaphoric *bite* of this)—

“Provide a sword that ’s keen
And with it, a bright lamp:”
Such wicked words they pour into her ear
More poisonous than her husband could appear.—

PSYCHE WAS TROUBLED

Psyche was troubled as the sea in mind . . .
Then in one hand she took the emulous light,
And in the other took the sword so bright
As ’t would her beauty and the fire outshine,
And she thus armed, became more masculine.
But when, by friendship of the lamp, her eye
Had made a perfect, true discovery
Of all was in the room, what did she see?
Object of love, wonder of deity
The god of Love himself, Cupid the fair,

Lie sweetly sleeping in his golden hair!
At this so heavenly sight, the lampy spire
Increased his flames, and burnt more pure, and higher.
The very senseless sacrilegious steel,
Did a strong virtue from his presence feel,
Which turned the edge,—poor Psyche, all amazed,
With joy and wonder on his beauty gazed:
His neck so white, his colour so exact,
His limbs, that were so curiously compact:
His body sleek and smooth, that it might not
Venus repent t' have such a son begot.
A bright reflection and a perfumed scent
Filled all the room with a mixed blandishment
Shot from his wings, and at his feet did lie
His bows, his arrows, and his armory.

Then fell that drop of oil from the lamp, as Psyche
stooped over his sleeping form—the drop of oil that had

—A burning appetite
To touch that silken skin that was so white—

THE DROPPING OF THE OIL AND CUPID'S VOW IN CONSEQUENCE

—For this heinous and audacious fact,
Cupid among his statutes did enact,
Henceforth all lights be banished, and exempt,
From bearing office in love's government.
And in the day each should his passage mark,
Or learn to find his mistress in the dark.

It is known to all who have read their legend in Apuleius,
that Cupid and Psyche were finally reunited by Jove.

When Alexander Pope, in his "Rape of the Lock" wrote the passage descriptive of the sylphs aiding the toilet of "the Fair,"—beginning with the lines—

"These though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the box and hover round the ring"—

he must have remembered the following description of Venus at her toilet—

VENUS AT HER TOILET

The graces came about her, and in haste
What the rough seas and rude winds had misplaced
Did recompense with art and studious care . . .
These wait about her person still, and pass
Their judgment on her, equal with their glass.
These temper her ceruse, and paint, and limn
Her face with oil, and put her in the trim:
Twelve other handmaids, clad in white array,
Called the twelve Hours, and daughters of the Day,
Did help to dress her: there were added more,
Twelve of the night, whose eyes were shadowed o'er
With dusky and black veils . . .

They her linen starch or else prepare
Strong distillations to make her fair.
These bring her baths and ointments for her eyes,
And provide cordials 'gainst she shall arise.
Those play on music, and perfume her bed,
And snuff the candle, while she lies to read
Herself asleep; thus all, assigned unto
Their several office, had enough to do.

VENUS'S DESCRIPTION OF HER SON

Though he seem naked to the eye,
His mind is clothed with subtlety;

Sweet speech he uses, and soft smiles,
To entice where he beguiles:
His words are gentle as the air,
But trust him not, though he speak fair,
And confirm it with an oath.
He is fierce and cruel both,
He is bold and careless too,
And will play as wantons do:
But when you think the sport is past,
It turns to earnest at the last.

VENUS ASCENDS HER CHARIOT

Then of those many hundred doves that soar
About her palace, she selected four,
Whose chequered necks to the small traces tied,
With nimble gyres they up to heaven did glide:
A world of sparrows did by Venus fly,
And nightingales that sung melodiously;
And other birds accompanied her coach,
With pleasant noise proclaiming her approach,
For neither hardy eagle, hawk, nor kite
Durst her sweet-sounding family affright.



OWEN FELTHAM

1602-1677

MAXIM GORKY, somewhere, in one of his books, alludes to the boredom and weariness the moral prating of the Classics brings him, with their repetitive and prolix insistence on the fact "that Good is Good, and Bad is Bad."

Feltham's prose works fall into this category,—except that they have no place among the Classics. "The Resolves" of this Bacon of the Commonplace went into many editions.

Feltham confesses: "That I might curb my own wild passions I have writ these."

The Poet Randolph to Feltham—

"Thy life had been pattern enough had it of all been seen
Without thy book."

Of Feltham's life little is known, except that he was secretary or gentleman-of-the-horse to the Earl of Thormond. He seems never to have followed a profession:

"I have food convenient for me; and I . . . find exercise to keep my body healthful. I can be as warm in a good kersey as a prince in a scarlet robe."

He "was steadily attached to the sound and sober doctrines of the Church of England."

He showed great asperity against women, evidently because one of them whom he would have had, would have none of him.

He was finally happily married and lived in retirement in the country.

It is his brave attack on the bullying, mediocre Ben Jonson

that should keep his name from being forgotten—Jonson, who had, because of the failure of his plays, written an ode beginning—"Come let us leave the loathéd stage."

Feltham had the courage to brave the insolence of the literary dictator.

Feltham's saying—

Whosoever would be happy must be so to himself.

COME, LEAVE THIS FANCY WAY

(To Ben Jonson)

Come, leave this fancy way
Of baiting those that pay
Dear for the sight of your declining wit:
'T is known it is not fit
That a sale * poet, give't contempt once thrown,
Should cry up thus, his own.
I wonder by what dower
Or patent you had power
From all to rapt a judgment,—
Let 't suffice
Had you been modest, y' had been granted wise. . . .

To rail men into approbation
Is new, is yours alone,
And prospers not: for know
Fame is as coy as you
Can be disdainful; and who dares to prove
A rape on her, shall gather scorn, not love.

Leave then this humour vain,
And this more humorous strain,
Where self-conceit and choler of the blood

* Morose.

Eclipse what else is good:
Then if you please those raptures high to touch,
Whereof you boast so much;
And but forbear your crown
Till the world puts it on,
No doubt from all you may amazement draw. . . .

I AM CONFIRMED IN MY BELIEF

I am confirmed in my belief,
No woman hath a soul!
They but delude, that is the chief
To which their fancies roll.

So though they seem to cheer, to speak
Those things we most implore,
They do but flame us up to break,
Then never mind us more.

THE RECONCILEMENT

Come now, my fair one, let me love thee new,
Since thou art new-created, for 't is true
Where souls distained by loose and wandering fears
Once purge themselves by penitential tears.
They gain a second birth and scorn to fly
At any mark but noblest purity.
Then who can tell that e'er there was offense?
Contrition does as much as innocence.

GUNEMASTIX

Woman—

So primitively ill that she ne'er could
Yet tell the sense of honesty or good:
And therefore at the first was forced to creep
Into the world while man was dead asleep:

Then in her young creation wrought such smart,
As tore the rib out that lay next his heart:
For had he waked and had but half his sense
He sooner would have coped with pestilence
Than joined with her: who so of joy bereft him,
That ere night came, she for the Devil left him—
And if it had not been to damn him too,
She had ne'er returned, she liked his company so!

—then, with a remorseful sense of fairness, in the midst of his misogynistic anger, he exclaims—

Passion and fury pulls that from my pen
I never thought of!

—and now he continues, magnificently making amends by speaking of the woman's body's being so beautiful that it was—

—A temple for the Deity so fit
As God's great son left heaven to dwell in it!



EDMUND WALLER

1605-1687

EDMUND WALLER, in an early portrait, showed himself to be debonair and not yet weighed down by the conflicts of conduct and conscience. In this early picture he wears a courtly, smart, slight moustache, and his lips are pursed rather petulantly.

But there exists a different representation of him which portrays him after life has had its way; it shows the inroads made upon his character . . . here he is heavy-faced, and from the frame of a huge, chestnut wig, a frayed seriousness looks forth from weary eyes, and the lines about the mouth drag in defeated sadness. . . .

Waller supplely celebrated those who chanced to be in power, whether Protector or King,—chameleon to each change in the State. And all his poems were addressed to people of influence and “persons of honour.”

A true courtier poet, in his beginnings he was fostered by Sir Philip Sidney.

Most of his verse that is not panegyrical is written on the perennial theme of love; but, at the end of his career and in his old age,—in retirement,—he composed devotional poetry; which somehow, in spite of the old man’s sincerity, failed to “come off.” Herrick, in a like attempt, failed, in his “Noble Numbers.”

The Muses, being Pagan in origin, ever seem to lag, except rarely—when impressed into the service of Christian thought and morality.

The epilogue to Waller's "Divine Poems" wakes to authentic fire only—especially those last six lines, often quoted, where the aging body is compared to an old cottage, through whose widening chinks the Light breaks through.

King Charles, on his restoration, rallied this poet for his quick return to royalty in his Song, and was placated by the adroit courtier's answer of Waller—"Poets, Sir, succeed better in fiction than in truth." (The King alleging that Waller had written a better poem on Cromwell than on him.)

Waller married wealth, while possessing wealth in his own right.

When what was known as "Waller's Plot" was detected, the poet went basely down and crawled out of the trap on all fours of meanness, escaping with a miserable whole skin, while some of his companions died for the cause.

Waller's eventual freedom cost him the enormous sum of ten thousand pounds. . . .

Waller, as well as Keats much later, read Chapman's Homer with rapture.

AN APOLOGY FOR HAVING LOVED BEFORE

To man, that was in th' evening made,
Stars gave the first delight;
Admiring, in the gloomy shade,
Those little drops of light;

But when the bright sun did appear,
All those he 'gan despise;
His wonder was determined there,
And could no higher rise:

He neither might, nor wished to know
A more refulgent light:

For that (as mine your beauties now)
Employed his utmost sight!

TO MY YOUNG LADY SIDNEY

Why came I so untimely forth
Into a world, which, wanting thee,
Could entertain us with no worth
Or shadow of felicity?
That time should me so far remove
From that which I was born to love!
Yet, fairest blossom! do not slight
That age which you may know so soon:
The rosy morn resigns her light,
And milder glory, to the noon:
And then what wonders shall you do,
Whose dawning beauty warms us so?
Hope waits upon the flowery prime;
And summer, though it be less gay,
Yet is not looked on as a time
Of declination, or decay:
For, with a full hand, *that* does bring
All that was promised by the spring.

OF THE MARRIAGE OF DWARFS

Design, or chance, make others wive;
But nature did this match contrive:
Eve might as well have Adam fled,
As she denied her little bed
To him, for whom heaven seemed to frame
And measure out, this only dame.
Thrice happy is that humble pair,
Beneath the level of all care!
Over whose head those arrows fly

Of sad distrust, and jealousy:
Secured in an as high extreme,
As if the world held none but them . . .
Ah, Chloris, that kind nature thus
From all the world had severed us:
Creating for ourselves *us two*,
As love has *me* for only *you*!

ON HIS DIVINE POEMS—WRITTEN IN HIS OLD AGE

When we for age could neither read nor write,
The subject made us able to indite:
The soul, with nobler resolutions decked,
The body stooping, does herself erect:
No mortal parts are requisite to raise
Her that, unbodied, can her Maker praise.
The seas are quiet, when the winds give o'er:
So, calm are we, when passions are no more!
For, then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness which age descries.
*The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light, through chinks that time had made:
Stronger by weakness, wiser, men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stands upon the threshold of the new.*

TWO EPITAPHS, OFFERED IN CONTRAST

(Dryden's, On His Own Wife,—Sir Henry Wotton's,—
On Another's.)

Epitaph, Intended for Dryden's Wife
Here lies my wife: here let her lie!
Now she 's at rest, and so am I!

Upon the Death of Sir Albert Morton's Wife

He first deceased; she for a little tried
To live without him, liked it not, and died!

In Wotton's works, these two simple lines sound forth
like a flute that plays clear a moment, then stops!—



HENRY MORE

1614-1687

NOT THE famous statesman and author of the "Utopia," but a once well-known philosopher, and poet; and theologian of that group of churchmen "who, from having investigated and explained the analogy between Christianity and the ideal philosophy of the Greeks, acquired the name of Platonic Divines."

Henry More "was ambitious only of retirement and a free leisure; refusing high preferment in the church, and devoting himself to a lifetime of study and contemplation."

His works "once enjoyed a great degree of popularity."

MORNING HYMN

Rise at once—let's sacrifice:
Odours sweet perfume the skies.
See how heavenly lightning fires
Hearts inflamed with high aspires;
All the substance of our souls
Up in clouds of incense rolls!
Leave we nothing to ourselves
Save a voice—what need we else?
Or a hand to wear and tire
On the thankful lute or lyre.
Sing aloud; his praise rehearse
Who hath made the universe. . . .
God is good, is wise, is strong,
Witness all the creature-throng. . . .
Now myself I do resign;
Take me whole, I all am Thine!



PATRICK CAREY

(Dates of birth and death unknown)

16th Century

SIR WALTER SCOTT published a small volume of his poetry in 1819 from the only manuscript copy known.

Carey was a loyalist and high-churchman.

WHAT USE HAS HE MADE OF HIS SOUL?

What use has he made of his soul
Who, still on vices bent,
Ne'er strove his passions to control;
But humoring them his life has spent?
Pray tell me if I can
Call such a very thing as that is, MAN?
For since that just as sense has bid,
It do, or leave; it wrought, or ceased;
And would not hear when Reason chid,
Or her commands regard the least;
It might have lived even as it did,
And yet have been a beast.



SIR JOHN DENHAM

1615-1669

WHEN a young man, Denham showed no promise. He was slow and dreamy, and by many considered stupid. Instead of paying attention to his studies, he wasted days and nights at cards . . . he lost several thousand pounds bequeathed him by his father; and he was always more or less the prey of professional gamblers, never being cured of this habit that amounted to a major vice in him . . . though he made pretence of reformation, in an essay about its abandonment . . . so De Quincey pretended cure in his "Confessions of an Opium Eater."

Denham delighted, too, in "the healthful and more innocent sport of playing bowls."

He was tall and robust, stoop-shouldered . . . hair thin and flaxen, "with a moist curl" . . . face, merry, pitted by smallpox . . . eyes of the gambler,—small, goose-grey, penetrating from gimletting themselves to points in trying to puzzle out what an opponent would do next—what number he'd throw or card he'd cast down . . .

Denham's gait was rather slow and stalking . . .

During the Civil War he was (from the Roundhead viewpoint) contumaciously loyal to the King's side, and was forbidden to enter London . . .

He stayed with Charles the Second in Paris, and continually lightened that monarch's exile with amusing and vulgar rhymes . . .

He was chiefly instrumental in raising quite a few thou-

sand pounds for the King's immediate exigencies, among the canny Scotch traders that throve roaming about Poland . . . a fact over which he jested . . .

On the eve of the Restoration, he arranged the details of the King's coronation in London . . . and was, subsequently, one of the lucky ones who received adequate recompense of the King's favour. He was decorated with the Order of Bath, and was appointed Surveyor of the King's Buildings. . . .

In his domestic life, Denham was not so fortunate . . . his first wife died . . . he married a second. His unhappiness and great trouble with her drove him mad for a time. . . .

Gossip accused Denham of having bought "Cooper's Hill" of a clergyman for the sum of forty pounds . . . a gross and utterly unfounded lie . . .

Denham was one of the "poets of locality"—and "Cooper's Hill" made him famous. It was said of his tragedy "The Sophy" that "it broke out like the Irish Rebellion, three score thousand strong, when nobody was aware or in the least expected it."

Denham was buried in Westminster Abbey.

His sayings—

The good fellow is nowhere a stranger.—

From our desires our actions grow.

HOMER NOT BLIND

I can no more believe old Homer blind,
Than those who say the sun hath never shined:
The age wherein he lived was dark, but he
Could not want sight who taught the world to see.

THE CHURCH MILITANT

Though the foundation on a rock were laid,
The Church was undermined, and then betrayed.
Though the Apostles these events foretold,
Yet even the shepherd did devour the fold:
The fisher to convert the world began
The pride convincing of vain-glorious man;
But soon his followers grew a sovereign lord
And Peter's keys exchanged for Peter's sword.

ON THE EARL OF STRAFFORD'S TRIAL AND DEATH

Great Strafford! worthy of that name, though all
Of thee could be forgotten but thy fall,
Crushed by imaginary treason's weight,
Which too much merit did accumulate.
As chemists gold from brass by fire would draw,
Pretexts are into treason framed by law.
His wisdom such, as once did it appear
Three kingdoms' wonder, and three kingdoms' fear,
Whilst single he stood forth, and seemed, although
Each had an army, as an equal foe.
Such was his force of eloquence, to make
The hearers more concerned than he that spake:
Each seemed to act the part he came to see,
And none was more a looker-on than he.
So did he move our passions, some were known
To wish, for his defence, the crime their own.
Now private pity strove with public hate,
Reason with rage, and eloquence with fate.
Now they could him if he could them forgive;
He's not the guilty, but too wise to live:
Less seem those facts which treason's nickname bore
Than such as feared ability for more.

They after death their fears of him express,
His innocence and their own guilt confess.
Their legislative frenzy they repent,
Enacting it should make no precedent.
This fate he could have scaped, but would not lose
Honour for life, but rather nobly chose
Death from their fears than safety for his own,
That his last action all the rest might crown.



WILLIAM CHAMBERLAYNE

1619-1689

THE FORECAST motto of his life should be this saying of Quarles: "The sickle that's too early cannot reap the fruitful harvest."

A poet-physician of Shaftesbury. His practice was poor. He was caught in the enduring traps of narrow circumstance. He lamented the fact of not being able to meet the great living literary personages.

Chamberlayne was an indiscouragable Royalist; and he fought in hard fields and lived under wet tents for his royal master . . . where he wrote the first two books of "Pharonnida," his long story in verse. The last two books were written between calls on patients,—on his return to civil life and the practice of his profession.

Chamberlayne's son, Valentine, indignant at his father's lack of famed recognition, set a fine monument over him, after his death.

Chamberlayne, it must be confessed, cultivated a lazy muse . . . he worked with an indolent, metaphor-heaping mind, and seldom went back over his profuse verse either to prune or refine it. But there is enough passion and direct vigour of epithet there to set up several poets of larger pretence and repute.

The Keats of the "Endymion" owes much more to Chamberlayne than has yet been critically uncovered, and Shelley must have read the following verse, before writing "The Sensitive Plant."

A SOLITARY WILDERNESS

—A solitary wilderness whose brow
Winter had bound in folds of ice, be left
To wail their absence; whilst each tree, bereft
Of leaves, did like to virgin mourners stand,
Clothed in white veils of glittering icelets, and
Shook with the breath of those soft winds that brought
The hoary frost. The pensive birds had sought
Out springs that were unbarred with ice, and there
Grew hoarse with cold; the crusted earth did wear
A rugged armour; every bank, unclad
With flowers, concealed the juicy roots that had
Adorned their summer's dress; the meadows green
And fragrant mantle, withered, lay between
The grizzly mountain's naked arms—*all grows*
Into a swift decay as if it owes
That tribute unto her departure, by
Whose presence 'twas adorned—

A few lines plucked at random from the riches of his
verse—

Close as unsuspected plague that in
Darkness assaults.—

Speed, that startled action!—
That best composure of a stormy mind,
A still devotion.—

All the slow delays of love, arrived
To the unguarded gate, Friendship.—
Maids more chastely sweet
Than flowers which grow untouched in deserts.—

(Gray,—

“Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”)

From silver shrines
The kindled lamps through all the temple shines
With dappled rays.—("And beneath all there ran a stream
of lamps straight on from wall to wall"—Keats,
"Lamia")

Lovers that "smother delight in whispers."—
Anger like unobstructed love
Breaks forth in flaming haste.—

Those blood-erected pyramids that stand
On secret murder's black and rotten sand.—
By that effeminate wanton, flattery,
Stroked to a yielding mildness.—
Honour's unwithered laurels.—
The grave, death's quiet inn.—
About
That sober time when light's small lamps go out
At the approach of day's bright glories.—

And didn't Pope take the hint for his lines on Bacon
from—

To be beheld upon the Public Stage,
The glory, yet the scandal of the age.—

"Sorrow's black armour" says Chamberlayne—one of Eli-
nor Wylie's books of poetry bears the title "Black Armour."

Chamberlayne's sayings—

Airy hope, that wanton bird which sings
As soon as fledged.

While Power offends the poor scarce hope for law.—

Life's best joy—an universal praise
Acquired from just desert.

THE GROWTH OF TRUE LOVE

But leaving these to rectify that state
Thus fever-shook,—return to whom we late
Left gently calmed—that happy pair which in
Desire, the shady porch of love, begin
That lasting progress, which ere ended shall
So oft their fate to strong assistance call.
Some months in happy, free delights—before
Passion got strength enough to dictate more
Than reason could write fair—they 'd spent; in which
Slumber of fancy, popular love grown rich,
Soon becomes factious, and engages all
The powers of nature to procure the fall
Of the soul's lawful sovereign. Either in
Each action of the other did begin
To place an adoration—she doth see
Whate'er he doth, as shining majesty . . .

Her actions in his sight
Appear like fire's feigned element, with light
But not destruction, armed. In either's eyes
The other seemed to wear such a disguise
As poets clothed their wandering gods in when
In forms disguised they here conversed with men.

THE UNFAVoured POET'S LOT

(Resolute still for Poesy amid Poverty)

Here harsh employments, the unsavory weeds
Of barren wants, had overrun the seeds
Of fancy with domestic cares, and in
Those winter-storms shipwrecked whate'er had been
My youth's imperfect offspring, had not I,
For love of this,—neglected poverty!
That meagre fiend, whose rusty talons stick

Contempt on all that are enforced to seek
Like me a poor subsistence 'mongst the low
Shrubs of employment, whilst blest wits, that grow
Good fortune's favorites, like proud cedars stand,
Scorning the stroke of every feeble hand,
Whose vain attempts, though they should martyr sense,
Would be repulsed with big-bulked confidence:
Yet blush not, gentle muse! thou oft hast had
Followers, by Fortune's hand as meanly clad,
And such as, when time had worn envy forth,
Succeeding ages honoured for their worth.

ARGALIA, THE CAPTIVE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR, RESISTS
THE LUSTFUL ADVANCES OF THE SULTANESS, JANUSA

—For here gay vanity, though clothed in all
Her gaudy pageants, let her trophies fall
Before bright virtue's throne; with such a high
Heroic scorn as aged saints that die
Heaven's favorites, leave the trivial world, he (Argalia)
 slights
That gilded pomp; no splendid beam invites
His serious eye to meet their objects in
An amorous glance: reserved as he had been
Before his grave confessor, he beholds
Beauty's bright magic, while its art unfolds
Great love's mysterious riddles, and commands
Captive Janusa to infringe the bands
Of matrimonial modesty. When all
Temptation fails, she leaves her throne to fall,
The scorn of greatness, at his feet: but prayer,
Like flattery, expires in useless air,
Too weak to batter that firm confidence
Their torment's thunder could not shake. From hence
Despair, love's tyrant, had enforced her to

More wild attempts, had not her Ammurat (her husband,
the Sultan), who,
Unseen, beheld all this, prevented by
His sight, the death of bleeding majesty . . .

AMMURAT'S DENUNCIATION

(Stepping into sight from his hiding-place)

“Thou prodigious whore,
The curse of my nativity, that more
Afflicts me than eternal wrath can do
Spirits condemned—some fiends, instruct me to
Heighten revenge to thy desert; that so
I should do more than mortals may, and throw
Thy spotted soul to flames. Yet I will give
It passport hence; for think not to outlive
This hour, this fatal hour, ordained to see
More than an age before of tragedy”—
When, fearing tears should win
The victory of anger, Ammurat draws
His cimitar, which had in blood writ laws
For conquered provinces, and with a swift
And cruel rage, ere penitence could lift
Her burthened soul in a repentant thought
Toward heaven, sheathes the cold steel in her soft
And snowy breast. With a loud groan she falls
Upon the bloody floor half-breathless, calls
For his untimely pity; but perceiving
The fleeting spirits, with her blood, were leaving
Her heart unguarded, she employs that breath
Which yet remained, not to bewail her death,
But beg his life that caused it—on her knees
Struggling to rise. But now calmed Ammurat frees
Her from disturbing death, in 's last, great work
And thus declares some virtue in a Turk . . .

(Ammurat, to Argalia, The Christian Captive):—

“I have, great Christian, by perusing thee,
In this great act of honour learned to be
Too late thy slow-paced follower—”

(He hands Argalia a ring for his safe conduct from the fortress, then slays himself over the body of his dying wife . . . and she, in a last voice, cries, taking and giving kisses with her dying husband):

“Eternity
Shall see my soul washed white in tears.”

SONG, ON THE INDUCTION OF TWO VIRGINS INTO A
CLOISTER—

To secret walks, to silent shades,
To places where no voice invades
The air, but what 's created by
Their own retired society,
Slowly these blooming nymphs we bring
To wither out their fragrant spring;
For whose sweet odors lovers pine,
Where beauty doth but vainly shine:

Chorus

Where Nature's wealth, and Art's assisting cost,
Both in the beams of distant hope are lost.

To cloisters where cold damps destroy
The busy thoughts of bridal joy;
To vows whose harsh events must be
Uncoupled cold virginity;
To pensive prayers, where heaven appears
Through the pale cloud of private tears,
These captive virgins we must leave,
Till freedom they from death receive:

Chorus

Only in this remote conclusion blest,—
This vale of tears leads to eternal rest.

Then since that such a choice as theirs,
Which styles them the undoubted heirs
To heaven, 't were sinful to repent,
Here may they live, till beauty spent
In a religious life, prepare
Them with their fellow saints to share
Celestial joys, for whose desire
They freely from the world retire:

Chorus

Go, then, and rest in blessed peace, whilst we
Deplore the loss of such society.

I FEEL LIFE'S CORDAGE CRACKED

I feel life's cordage cracked, and hence must go
From time and flesh,—like a lost feather, fall
From the wings of vanity, forsaking all
The various changes of the world, to see
What wondrous change dwells in eternity.

Two Poems—by Mr. and Mrs. John Hoskins—

SWEET BENJAMIN, GUARD THY TONGUE

(A poem sent by John Hoskins to his son, from the
Tower,—where he lay, condemned to death.)

Sweet Benjamin, since thou art young,
And hast not yet the use of tongue,
Make it thy slave, while thou art free;
Imprison it, lest it do thee.

(Here follow verses boldly sent to the King, by Mrs. Hoskins, in behalf of her husband):

THE WORST IS TOLD

The worst is told; the best is hid;
Kings know not all; I would they did;
What though my husband once have erred?
Men more to blame have been preferred.
Who hath not erred, he doth not live;
He erred but once; once, King, forgive!



THOMAS FLATMAN

1635-1688

THOMAS FLATMAN was an unwavering and sincere royalist, never trimming his politics to times and occasions.

In his youth he slackly studied law, in order dutifully to follow out his father's wishes . . . and, later, slackly practiced it. His heart was wholly in his miniature painting and his poetry.

As a miniature painter, he stood next to Cooper, the greatest of his generation in the practice of that art. Over a dozen of Flatman's efforts are still extant in the hands of various collectors in England.

As a poet, Flatman unfortunately fell under the influence of Cowley and his bastard Pindaric odes:

Rochester called Flatman a "slow drudge" imitating "Cowley's swift, Pindaric strains" and riding "a jaded muse whipped with loose reins." The painter-poet himself falsely felt that his weak odes were his most important contributions to literature. Bad as they are, occasional lines of power occur, like his description of a breaking wave "grown hoary with one minute's age."

In his occasional lyric pieces his muse is all his own. There he develops a vigorous strain for which he has not been given sufficient credit by the contemptuous critic who has generally looked no further into his poetry than his bad imitative Pindarics.

Little is known about the life of this man.

Easy-natured and practical, but not corrupt,—he was of the kind that readily adjust themselves to worldly affairs.

His marriage was one of convenience; doubtless also one of good-natured affection: it was said of him that “smitten of a fair virgin and more with her fortune, he did espouse her.”

We have several peep-holes into his daily existence: once when he writes to a friend of the great London Fire, telling of his gladness at seeing all the poor being given employment at digging for the new foundations among yet smoking ruins . . . at the same time expressing his doubts of London’s ever becoming a Troy Renovant . . . again, when, in another letter, he tells of Dr. Frampton’s preaching a sermon before the King and the Court, and making them weep with his eloquence on the text “God is a consuming fire.”

Flatman’s “Thought of Death,” running

When on my sick bed I languish
Full of sorrow, full of anguish,
Fainting, gasping, trembling, crying,
Panting, groaning, speechless dying,
My soul just now about to take her flight
Into the regions of eternal night.—

Is thought to have been plagiarized by Pope in his “The Dying Christian to His Soul”—but this charge of plagiarism is not well-founded. Both poets went back to “The Emperor Hadrian’s Address to His Soul When Dying,”—with Pope infinitely besting his obscurer rival. . . .

Warton, who wrote the most wretched of all histories of English Literature, called Flatman gratuitously and with uncalled-for acrimony “an obscure and forgotten rhymers.”

ON ORINDA

You of the sex that would be fair,
Exceeding lovely, hither come,
Would you be pure as angels are,
Come dress you by Orinda's tomb,
And leave your flattering glass at home,
Within that marble mirror see
How one day such as she
You must and yet alas! can never be.

COUNTRY HUSH

I listened heedfully around,
But not a whisper there was found,
The murmuring brook hard by,
As heavy and as dull as I,
Seemed drowsily along to creep:
It ran with undiscovered pace,
And if a pebble stopped the lazy race,
'T was but as if it started in its sleep.

THE INDIFFERENT

Prithee confess for my sake, and your own,
Am I a man or no?
If I am he, thou canst not love too soon,
If not, thou canst not be too slow;
If Woman cannot love, Man's folly 's great
Your sex with so much zeal to treat,
But if we freely proffer to pursue
Our tender thoughts and spotless love,
Which nothing shall remove,
And you despise all this, pray who are you?

TWO SONGS ON WEDLOCK

Wedlock puts Love upon the wrack,
Makes it confess 't is still the same
In icy age, as it appeared,
At first, when all was lively flame.
If Hymen's slaves, whose ears are bored,
Thus constant by compulsion be,
Why should not choice endear us more
Than them their hard necessity?
Phyllis, 'tis true thy glass does run,
But since mine too keeps equal pace,
My silver hair may trouble thee,
As much as me thy ruined face.

THE SECOND PART

How happy a thing were a wedding
And a bedding,
If a Man might purchase a wife
For a twelvemonth and a day;
But to live with her all a man's life,
For ever and for aye,
Till she grow as grey as a cat,
Good faith, Mr. Parson, I thank you for that!

THE HUMOURIST

Good faith I never was but once so mad
To dote upon an idle woman's face,
And then alas! my fortune was so bad
To see another chosen in my place,
And yet I courted her I'm very sure
With love as true as his was, and as pure.

But if I ever be so fond again
To undertake the second part of love,

To reassure that most unmanlike pain
Or after shipwreck do the ocean prove,
My mistress must be gentle, kind, and free,
Or I'll be as indifferent as she.

SONG—"ON THAT SAD DAY"—

On that sad day,
When friends shall shake their heads and say
Of miserable me,
"Hark how he groans," "look how he pants for breath,"
"See how he struggles with the pangs of death!"
When they shall say of these poor eyes
How hollow and how dim they be,
"Mark how his breast does swell and rise,
Against this potent enemy!"
When some old friend shall step to my bedside,
Touch my chill face, and thence shall gently slide,
And when his next companions say,
"How does he do?" "what hopes?"—shall turn away,
Answering only with a lift-up hand,
"Who can his fate withstand?"
Then shall a gasp or two do more
Than e'er my Rhetorick could before,
Persuade the peevish World to trouble me no more!



THOMAS SPRAT, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

1636-1713

SPRAT was the son of a clergyman. He was educated at a "quiet little school by the churchyard side"—not at Eton or Westminster.

He went to Oxford where he further pursued his sincere scholastic course.

He was a man who by nature fell into the reactionary opinion.

He helped found the Royal Society, and wrote a most interesting history of its transactions. In the Church he succeeded; advancing from one preferment to another, till he became Bishop. His years were thick with honours till King James fell into disgrace.

Still loyal to the King, he was arrested and falsely accused of plotting against the life of William of Orange, for the restoration of James. He vigorously defended himself and got off free: and every year he solemnly and with gladness celebrated his delivery by a religious ceremony of thanksgiving to God.

"In his poetry he considered Cowley a model; and supposed that, as he was imitated, perfection was approached."—Thus Dr. Johnson.

Cowley was so great a poet to him, that, in his ode to the celebrated Metaphoric poet he called him "The English Ovid, Anacreon, Virgil."

Following him in the bastard Pindaric ode, he neverthe-

less managed this false and dangerous form with, at times,
quite strenuous skill.

He wrote of Abraham Cowley—

Thy soul hath gone through all the Muse's tracks,
Where never poet's feet were seen before,
Hath passed those sands where others left their wrecks;
And sailed an ocean through, which some thought had no
shore.

Thou standest on Pindar's back;
And therefore a higher flight dost take:
Only thou art the eagle, not the wren;
Thou hast brought him from the dust,
And made him live again.

Pindar has left his barbarous Greece, and thinks it just
To be led by thee to the English shore.—

ON THE GRACELESS FORMER POETS—
IN CONTRADISTINCTION, PRAISE OF COWLEY

Poets till now deserved excuse, not praise,
Till now the Muses lived in taverns, and the bays
That they were truly trees did show,
Because by sucking liquor they did only grow.
Verses were counted fiction, and a lie
The very nature of good poetry.
He was a poet who could speak least truth,
Sober and grave men scorned the name,
Which once was thought the greatest fame.
Poets had nought else of Apollo but his youth:
Few ever spake in rhyme, but that their feet
The trencher of some liberal man might meet.
Or else they did some rotten mistress paint,
Call her their goddess or their saint.

THE PLAGUE AT ATHENS

(Really a picture of the London Plague. The verse reaches sporadic heights of power.)

. . . Death in the most frequented places lives;
Most tribute from the crowd receives,
And though it bears a scythe, and seems to own
A rustic life alone,
It loves no wilderness,
No scattered villages,
But mighty populous palaces,
The throng, the tumult, and the town. . . .
They * like some mighty burden bear
The lightest covering of air. . . .
There was no number now of death,
The sisters † scarce stood still themselves to breathe:
The sisters now quite wearied
In cutting single thread,
BEGAN AT ONCE TO PART WHOLE LOOMS. . . .
The merchant did behold
His ships return with spice and gold;
He saw it, and turned aside his head,
Nor thanked the gods, but fell among his riches dead! . . .
Up starts the soldier from his bed,
He, though Death's servant, is not freed,
Death him cashiered 'cause now his help she did not need.‡
He that ne'er knew before to yield
Or to give back, or yield the field,
Would fain now from himself have fled.
He snatched his sword now rusted o'er,
Dreadful and sparkling now no more,
And thus in open streets did roar:

* The folk who are smitten by the plague.

† The Fates.

‡ Death is of the feminine gender, as to Cherbury.

“How have I, Death, so ill deserved of thee,
That now thyself thou shouldst revenge on me?
Have I so many lives on thee bestowed?
Have I the earth so often dyed with blood?
Have I, to flatter thee, so many slain?
And must I now thy prey remain?
Let me, at least, if I must die,
Meet in the field some gallant enemy!” . . .
Draw back thy sword, O Fate,
Lest thou—by spending all mankind upon one feast—
Thou starve thyself at last. . . .
Go, and spare civilization, and take the savage worlds—
Go, and unpeople all those mighty lands—
Go, and the Spaniard’s sword prevent,
Go, make the Spaniard innocent;
Go, and root out all mankind there,
That when the European armies shall appear
Their sin may be the less,—
They may find all a wilderness,
And without blood the gold and silver there possess.



JOHN WILMOT, SECOND AND LAST EARL OF ROCHESTER

1647-1680

THE wittiest and most accomplished, and probably the most dissolute of the courtiers gathered about the Restoration monarch, Charles the Second.

His philosophy was one of living to the full by letting go the leash of the natural inclinations.

He spent his days between debauchery and escapades at Court and in the Town, and recuperating from his excesses in the country—where he wrote his lyrics celebrating inconstancy in love, and his satires against both individuals and the mass of mankind in general.

It has been said that he was banished from the Court at least once a year. . . .

At one time he seduced the King's mistress . . . at another, sold medicines and nostrums, as a supposed German mountebank, on the Tower Hill . . . again he disguised himself as a street beggar . . . made love as a porter . . . went about as an Italian mountebank and mimic. . . .

He pursued love-affairs among all classes of women, from the gutter to Whitehall and St. James . . . possessing, the while, genuine tenderness for his wife, whom he won, in the first instance, through effecting a wild elopement with her.

Though the knowledge of Rochester's dissoluteness was already a sort of national property, Lady Rochester loved him to the last, as did also his son, who scarcely survived the father . . . with his death eclipsing the line. . . .

On his death bed, at the age of thirty-one, Rochester confessed to his good and pious friend, Bishop Burnet (a man as thoroughly good and sincerely pious as Rochester was as thoroughly and sincerely bad and depraved) that he, Wilmot, had once been drunk for five years on end. . . .

To show his prevailing mood—the poet caused a picture to be painted of himself standing by an open window and crowning a monkey with bays, while the animal held a book in one paw, a roll of manuscript in the other. . . .

In personal appearance Rochester was tall, thin, blond . . . his lips a trifle sensuous and full; his nose rather large; features, in general, irregular.

But, as a whole, his was a face that, when fired with animation, must have been considered handsome. . . .

Like Shelley, he went with a stoop. But Shelley's stoop was that of the quick, hasty-pacing enthusiast plunging eagerly ahead, while Wilmot's was the negligent, fashionable stoop of the beau leaning over to pronounce a phrase of wit or a line of clever verse into the ear of "the Fair."

Tennyson was wont to quote with great feeling Rochester's lines which begin "Then Old Age and Experience"—etc.

Because of this nobleman's dissolute reputation, after his death many filthy verses and scurrilous rhymes were added to his works, that were not rightly his.

A lesser, more misanthropic Byron.

TALK NOT OF INCONSTANCY

All my past life is mine no more,
The flying hours are gone:
Like transitory dreams giv'n o'er,
Whose images are kept in store
By memory alone.



THE EARL OF ROCHESTER

The time that is to come is not;
How can it then be mine?
The present moment 's all my lot,
And that, as soon as it is got,
Phyllis, is only thine.

Then talk not of inconstancy,
False hearts and broken vows,
If I by miracle can be
This live-long minute true to thee,
'T is all that heaven allows.

LIKE A GREAT FAMILY

The world appears like a great family,
Whose lord, oppressed with pride and poverty,
(That to the few great bounty he may show)
Is fain to starve the numerous train below.
Just so seems Providence, as poor and vain,
Keeping more creatures than it can maintain:
Here 't is profuse, and there it meanly saves,
And for one prince, it makes ten thousand slaves.

DID E'ER THIS SAUCY WORLD AND I

Did e'er this saucy world and I agree,
To let it have its beastly will on me?
Why should my prostituted sense be drawn
To every rule their musty customs spawn?
But men may censure you—'t is two to one,
Whene'er they censure, they 'll be in the wrong.
There 's not a thing on earth that I can name,
So foolish, and so false, as common fame.
It calls the courtier knave, the plain man, rude,
Haughty the grave, and the delightful lewd,
Impertinent the brisk, morose the sad,

Mean the familiar, the reserved one mad. . . .
Poor, helpless woman is not favoured more,
She 's a sly hypocrite or public whore.
Then who the devil would give this—to be free
From the innocent reproach of infamy?
These things considered, make me (in despite
Of idle rumour) keep at home and write.

THEN OLD AGE AND EXPERIENCE

Were I, who, to my cost, already am
One of those strange, prodigious creatures man,
A spirit free, to choose for my own share,
What sort of flesh and blood I pleased to wear,
I'd be a dog, a monkey, or a bear,
Or anything but that vain animal,
Who is so proud of being rational.
The senses are too gross, and he 'll contrive
A sixth, to contradict the other five;
And, before certain instinct, will prefer
Reason, which fifty times to one does err.
Reason, an ignis fatuus of the mind,
Which leaves the light of nature, sense, behind:
Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes,
Through error's fenny bogs, and thorny brakes;
Whilst the misguided follower climbs with pain
Mountains of whimsies, heaped in his own brain:
Stumbling from thought to thought, falls headlong down
Into Doubt's boundless sea, where, like to drown,
Books bear him up a while, and make him try
To swim with bladders of philosophy;
In hopes still to o'ertake the skipping light,
The vapour dances in his dazzled sight,
Till, spent, it leaves him to eternal night.

*Then Old Age and Experience, hand in hand,
Lead him to death, and make him understand,
After a search so painful and so long,
That all his life he has been in the wrong.*

AFTER DEATH

After death nothing is, and nothing death,
The utmost limit of a gasp of breath.
Let the ambitious zealot lay aside
His hope of heaven (whose faith is but his pride);
Let slavish souls lay by their fear,
Nor be concerned which way, or where,
After this life they shall be hurled:
Dead, we become the lumber of the world,
And to that mass of matter shall be swept
Where things destroyed with things unborn are kept;
Devouring time swallows us whole,
Impartial death confounds body and soul.
For hell, and the foul fiend that rules
The everlasting, fiery gaols,
Devised by rogues, dreaded by fools,
With his grim, grisly dog that keeps the door,
Are senseless stories, idle tales,
Dreams, whimsies, and no more.



CHARLES MONTAGUE

1661-1715

CHARLES MONTAGUE, M.P., one of the Commissioners of the Treasury; Member of the Privy Council; Chancellor of the Exchequer; Baron Halifax; twice one of the Regents: once during the absence of King William; again at the death of Queen Anne; Earl of Halifax—thus he climbed the ladder of advancement. . . .

For, beginning a poet, Halifax soon saw there was little preferment in the practice of the art, much certainty of failure and misery, so he rode the seas of political life, was now up, now down . . . finished with prestige and wealth . . . remaining all through his career the friend of poets; receiving more dedications from them, in turn, than kings could boast of . . . in his quiet hours wooing the muse himself. . . .

It is said that no poet applied unavailingly to him for help.

THE MAN OF HONOUR

Not all the threats or favour of a crown,
A prince's whisper or a tyrant's frown,
Can awe the spirit, or allure the mind
Of him who to strict honour is inclined.
Though all the pomp and pleasure that does wait
On public places and affairs of state
Should fondly court him to be base and great—
With even passions and with settled face,
He would remove the harlot's false embrace.



GEORGE STEPHNEY

1663-1707

GEORGE STEPHNEY's biographers remain snobbishly undecided as to whether his father was gentleman or grocer.

Stephney went to school at Westminster where he met Halifax. The two shared together their yet undiminished dreams of youth . . . Halifax conceiving a passion of friendship for Stephney that refused separation, and insisting on going to Cambridge with the latter, instead of himself waiting to be removed to Oxford the following year, to which college he had been elected.

On coming to London their dreams of the world seem to have been altered . . . both entered upon political careers,—Halifax, to become one of the great men of the kingdom; Stephney, fat-faced, good-natured, and wearing his huge wig, not to proceed so handily, but to thrive somewhat, too . . . he was used much in foreign negotiations and employments, where his smiling gentleness hid his cleverness in diplomacy. He served his King and Country well.

When he was quite young he was looked upon as a fine poet.

He never improved upon his youth, in the literary sense. He died, not old.

Johnson made several moral objections to the frankness of his translations from Juvenal.

TO THE EVENING STAR

Bright star! by Venus fixed above
To rule the happy realms of love;
Who in the dewy rear of day,
Advancing thy distinguished ray,
Dost other lights as far outshine
As Cynthia's silver glories thine;
Known by superior beauty there,
As much as Pastorella here.
Exert, bright star, thy friendly light,
And guide me through the dusky night.
Defrauded of her beams, the moon
Shines dim, and will be vanished soon.
I would not rob the shepherd's fold;
I seek no miser's hoarded gold;
To find a nymph, I 'm forced to stray,
Who lately stole my heart away.

"Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art"—writes Keats, in his last sonnet, to Fanny Brawne.

Here the "Bright Star" is made steadfast, "fixed by Venus," and the poet quests in mind toward Pastorella . . . as Keats, ashore for a brief space on the English coast, before resuming his voyage on "The Maria Crowther" to Italy, goes out in spirit to the woman he despairingly loves—longing hopelessly to be "pillowed" on her "ripening breast" . . .



WILLIAM WALSH

1663-1708

WILLIAM WALSH was known as a man of fashion, and was ostentatiously splendid in his dress.

Walsh confessed that he was "burdened with an amorous heart," and that there was not one folly he had not committed in his devotion to women, "except that of marriage." His attitude toward women was extremely modern; he recommended the equality of the sexes, and wrote a prose defense of "The Sex" for which Dryden executed the preface.

A man of influence (He was Master of Horse to the King) he exerted his interest in behalf of his friend Dryden, and fostered the youth of Pope, instructing the latter that to be a correct poet was the only way left of excellency. His judgment of poetry went askew, where friendship entered in, for he informed Pope that his pastorals were better than Virgil's.

Pope returned Walsh's favour by borrowing and bettering several of his lines.

In trying to reform the affected love-poetry of the age and break loose the influence of Petrarch over amatory verse, he did not succeed; his genius was not powerful enough . . . though he wrote a brave preface for his works . . . proclaiming, in part—"I would as soon believe a widow in great grief for her husband, because I saw her dance a coranto about his coffin, as believe a man in love with his mistress for his writing such verses as some great modern wits have done on theirs.

"I am satisfied that Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, were in love with their mistresses, while they upbraid them, quarrel with them, threaten them, forswear them; but I confess that I cannot believe Petrarch in love with his, when he writes conceits upon her name, her gloves, and her place of birth."

JEALOUSY

What fury does disturb my rest?
What hell is this within my breast?
Now I abhor, and now I love:
And each an equal torment prove.
I see Celinda's cruelty,
I see she loves all men but me;
I see her falsehood, see her pride,
I see a thousand faults beside;
I see she sticks at naught that 's ill;
Yet oh ye Powers! I love her still.
Others on precipices run,
Which, blind with love, they cannot shun:
I see my danger, see my ruin;
Yet seek, yet court, my own undoing:
And each new reason I explore
To hate her, makes me love her more.

SONG

Of all the torments, all the cares,
With which our lives are curst;
Of all the plagues a lover bears,
Sure rivals are the worst!
By partners, in each other kind,
Afflictions easier grow;

In love alone we hate to find
Companions of our woe.

Sylvia, for all the pangs you see
Are labouring in my breast;
I beg not you would favour me,
Would you but slight the rest!
How great so e'er your rigours are,
With them alone I 'll cope;
I can endure my own despair,
But not another's hope.



JOHN NORRIS

1667-1711

"NORRIS OF BEMERTON," for so he is styled, from having, during many years, held the living of that village, illustrious also as the retreat of George Herbert.

The catalogue of Norris's writings is very numerous: among the chief are, "Miscellanies"; "Reason and Religion"; "A Christian Blessedness"; "Practical Discourses," and "A Philosophical Discourse concerning the Immortality of the Soul." I quote "The Meditation" for its sincere vigour.

THE MEDITATION

It must be done, my soul, but 't is a strange,
A dismal and mysterious change,
When thou shalt leave this tenement of clay,
And to an unknown somewhere wing away;
When time shall be eternity, and thou
Shalt be thou know'st not what, and live thou know'st not
how.

Amazing state! No wonder that we dread
To think of death, or view the dead.
Thou 'rt all wrapped up in clouds, as if to thee
Our very knowledge had antipathy.
Death could not a more sad retinue find
Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

Some courteous ghost, tell this great secrecy.
What 't is you are, and we must be.

You warn us of approaching death, and why
May we not know from you what 't is to die?
But you, having shot the gulf, delight to see
Succeeding souls plunge in with like uncertainty.

When life's close knot, by writ from destiny,
Disease shall cut, or age untie;
When after some delays, some dying strife,
The soul stands shivering on the ridge of life;
With what a dreadful curiosity
Does she launch out into the sea of vast eternity!

So when the spacious globe was deluged o'er,
And lower holds could save no more,
On the utmost bough the astonished sinners stood,
And viewed the advances of th' encroaching flood;
O'ertopped at length by th' element's increase,
With horror they resigned to the untried abyss.



THOMAS YALDEN

1671-1736

SON OF A gentleman. He was afforded the usual advantages of culture . . . ingratiating, he adapted himself suavely to the practical circumstances of his environment, but not in a large or creative manner.

At Oxford, he pronounced a declamation that seemed to Dr. Hough, the president, "too good for the young gentleman" . . . he was suspected of having derived it from some other source than his own invention. He was watched and discovered to be behaving suspiciously in the Library, as if he were cribbing passages from books. The Doctor accordingly set him an unexpected subject to produce an exercise on . . . but the young student, having happened to have just been "bugging up" on that subject, came off with acclaim . . . to Dr. Hough's astonished confusion. . . .

On the taking of Namur, Yalden penned a laudatory ode to King William—and again the charge of literary theft came up:

"His crime was for being a felon in verse,
And presenting his gift to the King:
The first was a trick not uncommonly scarce,
But the last was an impudent thing."

This smooth, easy person went in for preferment in the Established Church. But never received any high advancement because of his patent nature.

Yalden had many acquaintances among the brilliant and fashionable men of the age.

Like Flatman he cast in his poetic lot with the false Pindaric school of Cowley; and came into a like inheritance of obscurity.

FOR MANY UNSUCCESSFUL YEARS

For many unsuccessful years
At Cynthia's feet I lay;
Battering them often with my tears,
I sighed, but durst not pray.
No prostrate wretch before the shrine
Of some loved saint above,
E'er thought his goddess more divine,
Or paid more awful love.
Still the disdainful nymph looked down
With coy, insulting pride;
Received my passion with a frown,
Or turned her head aside.
Then Cupid whispered in my ear,
"Use more prevailing charms;
You modest, whining fool, draw near,
And clasp her in your arms,—
With eager kisses tempt the maid,
From Cynthia's feet depart;
The lips he briskly must invade
That would possess the heart."
With that I shook off all the slave,
My better fortunes tried;
When Cynthia in a moment gave
What she for years denied.



WILLIAM SOMERVILLE

1677-1742

UNLIKE his friend Shenstone, Somerville did not retire to the country to cultivate its "simplicity" and "virtues" because of a pique against the "Town" that had failed to receive him for a "man of parts" . . . he was the normal, hearty, fox-hunting squire, and it was with deliberate choice that he gave up a fellowship at Oxford for a squireship at his family seat in Warwickshire.

Somerville held no quarrel with the world. He loved the substantial comforts his position afforded; he loved the activities of his countryside; loved his pack of hounds and his horses; loved his bottle.

There was much more than the dull, full-blooded squire in this man's make-up. He carried with him through life an enjoyment of the classics, and a passion for poetical composition . . . was a friend to other poets and men of imagination. . . .

Somerville wrote of the life about him: of "Rural Games," "Field Sports," of "The Chase,"—these three being the titles to his books of verse.

It was "The Chase" that brought him fame . . . a long poem composed when he was old and rheumatic . . . sitting in his armchair, remembering fondly backward over the vanished scenes of the hunt he had participated in. . . .

In "The Chase" every so often the rushing spirit of the pursuit breaks through the stilted, high-flown, old-fash-

ioned blank verse—and there comes upon the ear the voices of the hounds, accompanying the jubilation of keen morning horns on the air. . . .

And the solemn love with which the old huntsman treats of his pack, is affecting and beautiful; the sincerity of his feeling lifting his sentiments above the bathetical and ridiculous, even where he seriously compares the assembled hounds in the kennels with a human senate,—the older ones being the leaders of opposing parties. . . .

This handsome, genial, six-foot squire found more in the chase than the death of the fox or the stag, the murder of the screaming hare . . . he showed a love for, and understanding of, all animate nature, carrying the expression of it into his poetry.

In the fine portrait of this majestic fellow, in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," puffy "liver-bags" caused by too much Port hang in pouches under the squire's eyes. . . .

Johnson, who disliked the coarse language Somerville employed in some of his fables, spoke slightly of his poetic acquirements by saying of him,— "he writes well for a gentleman."

There is a bit of story in "The Chase" that a greater poet would have more fully realized the possibilities of—a portrayal of Aungzebe's hunt, when a whole principality of wild beasts are gradually constricted by walls of elephants and ramparts of spears, and are smitten down by clouds of arrows . . . the remnant of the savage horde, exchanging their ferocity for abject fear, seek to hide under the heaps of the slain . . . when the ladies of the court, in tears, beg the Sultan to permit the survivors to escape . . . and there is a frantic rush of the frenzied animals through the unexpected avenue of retreat afforded them by the parted walls of tower-topped elephants. . . .

Somerville's sayings:—

Spots in the sun are in his lustre lost.—
The best elixir is a friend.—
The knaves who now are served in plate
Would starve if fools agreed.—
Whatever does constrain
Turns pleasure into pain.—
A genius can't be forced nor can
You make an ape an alderman.—
Believe me, friend, in every woman's eyes,
'Tis back, and brawn, and sinew, wins the prize.—
Naught can their ardent zeal constrain
Where each man's godliness is gain.—
What is freedom to the poor?

WHEN RUDDY STREAKS AT EVE

—When ruddy streaks

At eve forbode a blustering stormy day,
Or lowering clouds blacken the mountain's brow;
When nipping frosts, and the keen biting blasts
Or the dry parching east, menace the trees
With tender blossoms teeming: kindly spare
Thy sleeping pack, in their warm beds of straw
Low-sinking at their ease: listless they shrink
Into some dark recess, nor hear thy voice
Though oft-invoked; or haply if thy call
Rouse up the slumbering tribe, with heavy eyes
Glazed, lifeless, dull, downward they drop their tails.

THE SHEEP AND THE BUSH

A sheep, well-meaning brute! one morn
Retired beneath a spreading thorn,
A pealing storm to shun;

Escaped indeed both rain and wind,
But left, alas! his fleece behind:
Was it not wisely done?

READY MONEY

How humble, and how complaisant
Is the proud man reduced to want!
With what a silly, hanging face
He bears his unforeseen disgrace!
His spirits flag, his pulse beats low,
The gods, and all the world his foe;
To thriving knaves a ridicule,
A butt to every wealthy fool.
For where is courage, wit, or sense,
When a poor rake has lost his pence?
Let all the learned say what they can,
'T is ready money makes the man;
Commands respect where'er we go,
And gives a grace to all we do.

THE LUCKY HIT

As there is something in a face,
An air, and a peculiar grace,
Which boldest painters cannot trace;
That more than features, shape, or hair,
Distinguishes the happy fair,
Strikes every eye, and makes her known
A ruling toast through all the town:
So in each action 't is success
That gives it all its comeliness.
Guards it from censure and from blame,
Brightens and burnishes our fame:
For what is virtue, courage, wit,
In all men, but a lucky hit?

VIRTUE BY DEGREES

A Vicar lived on this side Trent
Religious, learned, benevolent,
A painful pastor; but his sheep,
Alas, within no bounds would keep,
A scabby flock, that every day
Run riot, and would go astray.
He thumped his cushion, fretted, vexed,
Thumbed o'er again each useful text,
Rebuked, exhorted, all in vain,
His parish was the more profane. . . .
At last, when each expedient failed,
And serious measures naught availed,
It came into his head to try
The force of wit and raillery.
The good man was by nature gay,
Could jibe and joke, as well as pray;
Not like some hide-bound folk, who chase
Each merry smile from their dull face,
And think pride zeal, ill-nature grace.
At christenings and each jovial feast
He singled out the sinful beast:
Let all his pointed arrows fly,
Told this and that, looked very sly,
And left my masters to apply.
His tales were humorous, often true,
And now and then set off to view
With lucky fictions and sheer wit,
That pierced, where truth could never hit.
The laugh was always on his side,
While passive fools by turn deride;
And giggling thus at one another,
Each jeering loud reformed his brother;
Till the whole parish was with ease
Shamed into virtue by degrees.

THE WISE BUILDER

Wise Socrates had built a farm,
Little, convenient, snug, and warm,
Secured from rain and wind:
A gallant whispered in his ear,
"Shall the great Socrates live here,
To this mean cell confined?"

"The furniture 's my chieftest care,"
Replied the sage; "here's room to spare,
Sweet sir, for me and you;
When this with faithful friends is filled,
An ampler palace I shall build;
Till then, this cot must do."

THE AUTHOR, AN OLD MAN,—TO HIS ARMCHAIR

Here, on thy yielding down I sit secure;
And patiently, what heaven has sent, endure;
Not fond of life, but yet content to be:
Here mark the fleeting hours; regret the past;
And seriously prepare to meet the last.
So, safe on shore the pensioned sailor lies,
And all the malice of the storm defies:
With ease of body blest, and peace of mind,
Pities the restless crew he left behind;
Whilst, in his cell, he meditates alone
On his great voyage, to the world unknown.



JOHN BYROM

1692-1763

A RHYME-MAD physician whose stringing together of words and phrases often made excellent sense. He seldom slipped into meaningless echolalia, like our native rhyme-mad physician, Dr. Colley Chivers, of Georgia, whose works Poe was falsely accused of plagiarizing, and from whose books in the British Museum Swinburne confessedly took several poetic hints.

Like the improvisators of Italy, Byrom delivered extempore verse on every possible subject, from an essay in rhyme on his own system of Universal English Shorthand, to poems explaining the theological meaning and intent of isolated words in the bible . . . in order to show his versifying facility he sent back letters he had received, with the ideas expressed therein, turned into verse for those who had originally written them . . . he cast in rhyme dialogues he overheard between servants and their masters on political and domestic events of the day . . . he poured out metrical affusions based on random quotations from Homer and Horace . . . listening in church, he drew up memorial extracts of sermons in couplets—strung out long rhythmic dissertations on the nature of Free Grace, Imputed Righteousness, Predestination, and Reprobation. . . .

A disciple of Jacob Boehmen and of the English mystic Law,—he of course turned various passages of their works into rhyme, not passing by even the dying speech of Law. . . .

This droll, amiable Jacobite mystic rhymers was much in love with the daughter of the great scholar Bentley. . . .

At the age of twenty-three he won notice by a pastoral of his printed in the twenty-eighth edition of the *Spectator*. . . .

In person Byrom was a strange-appearing, tall, stooped, skinny man with nut-cracker cheeks, whimsical, thin lips, strong nose, and long chin. . . . A Punch with more than a dash of the Gallic in him . . . just the kind of character that a repressed people like the English would delight in as an oddity, an eccentric.

The one poem of his that is quoted is entitled—"Three Black Crows!"

GOD BLESS THE KING

God bless the King, I mean the faith's defender,
God bless (no harm in blessing) the Pretender,
But who pretender is or who is king,
God bless us all—that's quite another thing.

THE BEAU AND THE BEDLAMITE

A patient in Bedlam who did pretty well,
Was permitted sometimes to go out of his cell.
One day when they gave him that freedom, he spied
A beauish young spark with a sword by his side,
With a huge silver belt and a scabbard of steel,
That swung at due length from his hip to his heel.

When he saw him advance on the gallery ground,
The Bedlamite ran and surveyed him all round;
While a waiter suppressed the Young Captain's alarm
With—"you need not to fear, Sir, he'll do you no harm."
At last he broke out—"Aye, a very fine show!
May I ask you one question?" "What's that?" said the
Beau.

“Pray what is that long, dangling, cumbersome thing
Which you seem to be tied to by ribbon and string?”
“Why, that is my sword!” “And what is it to do?”
“Kill my enemies, Master, by running them through.”
“Kill your enemies! Kill a fool’s head of your own!
They’ll die of themselves, if you let them alone!”



ROBERT BLAIR

1699-1746

THE AUTHOR of "The Grave" was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh; a Scotch minister who led a life of cleanly piety at Athelstanford. He was happily married to the daughter of Law, professor of Moral Philosophy.

Two London booksellers rejected "The Grave"; its acceptance was advised by Watts, the hymnologist; they explained their rejection of the work thus: "Considering how critical the age is with respect to such writings, they could scarce think that a person living within three hundred miles of London could write so as to be acceptable to the fashionable and polite."

Once published, the work slowly gained in popularity.

"The Grave" shows the remembrance of many death-bed scenes that Blair witnessed with his own eyes. There is in this poem a robust strength like that of a sturdy farmer following great-sinewed Norman horses, and sending a plow along wholesome furrows behind the massive team . . . with the good morning mists smoking up about the brown, upturned folds of earth . . . it was rightly illustrated by Blake, who here rose to his greatest heights of unearthly, pictorial imagination . . . notably in the engravings depicting "the death of the strong wicked man," and "the reunion of the soul and body at the resurrection."

Blair was of the Mortuary School of Verse. His strong song successfully breaks through the Eighteenth Century poetic formalism, and touches ideas directly—

THE DEATH OF THE STRONG MAN

Strength too—thou surly and less gentle boast
Of those that loud laugh at the village ring;
A fit of common sickness pulls thee down
With greater ease than e'er thou didst the stripling
That rashly dared thee to th' unequal fight.
What groan was that I heard? deep groan indeed!
With anguish heavy laden; let me trace it:
From yonder bed it comes where the strong man,
By stronger arm belaboured, gasps for breath
Like a hard-hunted beast! How his great heart
Beats thick! his roomy chest by far too scant
To give the lungs full play—eager he catches hold
Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,
Just like a creature drowning; hideous sight!
Oh! how his eyes stand out, and stare full ghastly!
While the distemper's rack and deadly venom
Shoots like a burning arrow 'cross his bowels,
And drinks his marrow up—Heard you that groan?
It was his last. See how the great Goliath,
Just like a child that brawls itself to rest,
Lies still—

DEATH, THE GLUTTON

This chaos of mankind.—O great man-eater!
Whose every day is carnival, not sated yet!
Unheard-of Epicure! without a fellow!
The veriest gluttons do not always cram;
Some intervals of abstinence are sought
To edge the appetite: thou seekest none.
Methinks the countless swarms thou hast devoured,
And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up,
This, less than this, might gorge thee to thy full.
But ah! rapacious still, thou gapest for more:



THE DEATH OF THE STRONG WICKED MAN

(From a drawing by William Blake)

Like one whole days defrauded of his meals,
On whom lank Hunger lays his skinny hand,
And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings. . . .
As if diseases, massacres, and poison,
Famine, and war, were not thy caterers.



ROBERT DODSLEY

1703-1764

DODSLEY was one child of many, in a large family of artisans.

He began life as a stocking weaver; the wages were meagre; fearing an existence on the border-line of starvation, he ran away from his apprenticeship, and took a place as footman. While so employed, he wrote verse, and brought out by subscription his first volume, "The Muse in Livery." Then he wrote a play "The Top Shop," based on Randolph's comedy "The Muses' Looking Glass." Pope seeing this play in the manuscript, obtained its dramatic presentation for the author. It made an immediate hit.

Unlike other poets, Dodsley conserved the profits; instead of immediately "blowing in" what he had gained; he set himself up in a bookshop in the Pall Mall; and was, from the first, successful. "His shop became the fashionable lounging place for persons of literature and rank."

Dodsley launched into the cognate business of publishing.

He was the first to encourage Johnson by purchasing for ten guineas his fine poem "London."

In "The Annual Register" and "The Museum" he brought out the efforts of the best writers of the day.

He passed a lifetime in intimacy with the great, yet remained unassuming, "never once trying to gloss over his humble origin."

"When Lord Lyttleton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out," says Dr. Johnson, according to Boswell, "one of which

is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Dartineuf well, for I was once his footman.'" . . .

Dodsley won the friendship of authors by his liberality and honesty. He was loved by all; sometimes affectionate fun was poked at him; he being dubbed "Doddy" . . .

"Doddy" was the first to edit the plays of the neglected Old Dramatists. . . .

He was the author of the play "Cleone"—which succeeded, despite Garrick's opening on the same night, in pique . . . in a rival playhouse . . . Garrick having had first chance at the play, and having rejected it because it afforded no adequate part for him. . . .

"Doddy was afraid to attend the first night," said Johnson. . . . "After the danger was over, Doddy went to his play every night to the stage-side and cried over Cleone."

Dodsley's book, "The Economy of Human Life," was popular for three quarters of a century, and was followed by a score of imitations—its popularity had a factitious beginning in that it was first ascribed to Lord Chesterfield.

This delightful author-publisher died of the gout, while on a visit to his friend Spence,—he of the "Anecdotes."

Hartley Coleridge wrote of him—

"Good Dodsley, honest, bustling, hearty soul . . .
Made rhymes on 'preaching' and blank verse on 'dung' . . .
Fair be his name among the knavish clan;
His noblest title was an honest man,
A bookseller, he robbed no bard of pelf"

Dodsley's verse was chiefly imitative of the School of Pope. His plays were adaptations of older ones.

When he tried to write naughty verse, after the manner of the Wits and Men of Fashion, he was rather clumsy at the task.

Byron owes far more than a hint to Dodsley's "One Parting Kiss" for his "Maid of Athens."

TO PATIENCE

Hail, mild divinity! calm patience, hail!

Soft-handed, meek-eyed maid, yet whose firm breath
And strong, persuasive eloquence prevail

Against the rage of pain, the fear of death:
Come, lenient beauty, spread thy healing wing,
And smoothe my restless couch while I thy praises sing.

In all this toilsome round of weary life,

Where dullness teases, or pert noise assails;

Where trifling follies end in serious strife,

And money purchases where merit fails;

What honest spirit would not rise in rage,

If patience lent not aid his passion to assuage?

No state of life but must to patience bow:

The tradesman must have patience for his bill;

He must have patience who to law will go;

And should he lose his right, more patience still;

Yea, to prevent or heal full many a strife,

How oft, how long must man have patience with his wife?

ONE PARTING KISS

One kind kiss before we part,

Drop a tear and bid adieu:

Though we sever, my fond heart

Till we meet shall pant for you.

Yet, yet weep not so, my love,

Let me kiss that falling tear,

Though my body must remove,

All my soul will still be here.

All my soul, and all my heart,
And every wish shall pant for you;
One kind kiss, then, ere we part,
Drop a tear, and bid adieu.

THE SECRET KISS

At the silent evening hour,
Two fond lovers in a bower
Sought their mutual bliss;
Though her heart was just relenting,
Though her eyes seemed just consenting,
Yet she feared to kiss.

"Since this secret shade," he cried,
"Will those rosy blushes hide,
Why will you resist?
When no tell-tale spy is near us,
Eye not sees us, nor ear can hear us,
Who would not be kissed?"

Molly hearing what he said,
Blushing lifted up her head,
Her breast soft wishes fill;
"Since," she cried, "no spy is near us,
Eye not sees, nor ear can hear us,
Kiss—OR WHAT YOU WILL!"

THE WIFE

The virtues that endear and sweeten life,
And form that soft companion, called a wife,
Demand my song. Thou who didst first inspire
The tender theme, to thee I tune my lyre.
Hail, lovely woman! nature's blessing, hail!
Whose charms o'er all the powers of man prevail:

The dry, dull, drowsy bachelor surveys,
Alternative, joyless nights and lonesome days:
No tender transports wake his sullen breast,
No soft endearments lull his cares to rest:
Stupidly free from nature's tenderest ties,
Lost in his own sad self he lives and dies.
Not so the man to whom indulgent Heaven
That tender bosom-friend, a wife, has given:
Him, blessed in her kind arms, no fears dismay,
No secret checks of guilt his mind allay:
No husband wronged, no virgin honour spoiled,
No anxious parent weeps her ruined child:
No fell disease, no false embrace is there,
The joys are safe, the raptures are sincere.

THE FOOTMAN POET, TO STEPHEN DUCK,
THE FARMER POET

The Iliad scarce was Homer's first essay;
Virgil wrote not his Aeneid in a day:
Nor is't impossible a time might be,
When Pope and Prior wrote like you and me.
'Tis true, more learning might their works adorn,
They wrote not from a PANTRY OR A BARN:
Yet they, as well as we, by slow degrees
Must reach perfection, learn to write with ease.

THE ADVICE (OF THE CANNY BOOKSELLER)

Dost thou, my friend, desire to rise
To honour, wealth, and dignities?
Virtue's paths, though trod by few,
With constant steps do thou pursue.
For as the coward-soul admires
The courage which the brave inspires;

And his own quarrels to defend,
Gladly makes such an one his friend;
So in a world which rogues infest,
How is an honest man caressed:
The villains from each other fly,
And on his virtues safe rely!

THE KINGS OF EUROPE

Why, pray, of late, do Europe's kings
No jester in their court admit?
They've grown such stately solemn things,
To bear a joke they think not fit.

But though each court a jester lacks,
To laugh at monarchs to their face;
All mankind do behind their backs
Supply the honest jester's place.

SONG (ON MAN)

Man's a poor deluded bubble,
Wand'ring in a mist of lies:
Seeing false or seeing double,
Who would trust to such weak eyes?

Yet, presuming on his senses,
On he goes most wondrous wise:
Doubts of truth, believes pretenses,
Lost in error, lives and dies!



SOAME JENYNS

1704-1787

SOAME JENYNS had a mother of great beauty and spirit; the small, dashing poet with one wen on his neck and another on the side of his nose, inherited, at least, all of her spirit.

The son of a knight, Jenyns was himself knighted by King William . . . he was first educated at home; at Oxford he studied with great industry; he left the university, without taking any degree "as was formerly the usual practice of gentlemen of fortune."

Always a man of leisure and early a poet, he resided at his father's town residence in the winter, on his country estate in the summer . . . he entered into politics, became a member of parliament . . . was contributor to Moore's "World."

Deviating from the conventional Christian thought in spite of his conservative instincts, Jenyns wrote a series of six letters, of an amazingly latitudinarian scope, which he caused to be published in book-form under the title, "A Free Inquiry Into the Origin of Evil." This work awoke much controversy and embittered contest, because in it he maintained that God himself, though omnipotent, could not prevent evil, "and that all evils owe their existence solely to the necessity of their own nature . . . they could not possibly be prevented without the loss of a superior good." These doctrines, being too wide and easy for the religiously strict Dr. Johnson, he attacked them in the "Literary Magazine" for 1757; Soame Jenyns' retort was one of the few

unkindnesses he perpetrated: the following severe epitaph on Dr. Johnson:

Here lies Sam Johnson:—Reader, have a care,
Tread lightly, lest you wake a sleeping bear:
Religious, moral, generous, and humane
He was; but self-sufficient, proud, and vain,
Fond of, and overbearing in, dispute,
A Christian and a scholar—but a brute.

Soame Jenyns,—this little, good-natured slight fellow with the two wens,—energetically lived up to his family motto of “*ignavis nunquam*”; he involved himself in many activities, “studying much, seeing more.”

“In his youth he had been fond of dress, as to be distinguished as one of the beaux of the time; but in the latter part of his life, his appearance was rather mean, being generally habited in a Bath beaver surtout, with blue worsted stockings.”

“He undertook all his duties seriously toward all his fellowmen, and was the same gentleman to all men . . . he especially had a regard for, and dignifiedly helped the Poor.” . . .

“In his private conversation he was witty, and his wit was liked, because he was ashamed if he hurt anyone by one of his sallies, thinking such behaviour abominable—to be clever at the expense of another’s feelings.”

Though his amorous poetry is generally the worst possible, he should today enjoy a greater fame as a satirist. Pope hardly excelled him in his mastery of the heroic meter on satirical subjects; nor Dryden, in his lucid use of it. He was a close and logical thinker in verse.

Jenyns was in favour of American Independence. He recommended a total separation of the Colonies, and a treaty of alliance and friendship, instead, between them and the

parent country . . . a project not less in far-seeingness than the present arrangement between England and the Dominions. . . .

Soame Jenyns married twice; first veering, it is feared, a little toward the advantages of fortune . . . this resulted in separation from unhappiness . . . his second marriage came more from the heart . . . his second wife survived him, when he died at the age of eighty-three, leaving no issue. . . .

He believed in a pre-existent state of man. . . .

In the last lines of his "Art of Dancing" he mistakenly prophesied his lasting fame.

Jenyns—

Music is the voice of love.—

Lanier—

"Music is love in search of a word."

Jenyns' sayings—

"The Modern, Fine Gentleman".—

So far is every virtue from his heart

That not a generous vice can claim a part.—

By little actions striving to be great.—

A ribband and a pension buy the slave:

This bribes the fool about him, that, the knave.—

Too indolent to learn what may be known

Or else too proud that ignorance to own.—

Great men when living must expect disgraces,

Dead, they're adored—when none desire their places.—

I'm quite provoked, when principles, though true,

Must stand impeached by fools because they're new.—

When angry patriots or in prose or rhymes

Extol the virtuous deeds of other times,

They only mean the present to disgrace,
And look with envious hate on those in place.

THE DEADLY FAN

(From "The Art of Dancing")

But let me now my lovely charge remind
Lest they forgetful leave their fans behind;
Lay not, ye fair, the pretty toy aside,
A toy at once displayed for use and pride,
A wondrous engine, that by magic charms
Cools your own breasts, and every other's warms.
What daring bard shall e'er attempt to tell
The powers that in this little weapon dwell?
What verse can e'er explain its various parts,
Its num'rous uses, motions, charms, and arts?
Its painted folds that oft extended wide,
The afflicted fair one's blubbered beauties hide,
When secret sorrows her sad bosom fill,
If Strephon is unkind, or Shock is ill:
Its sticks, on which her eyes dejected pore,
And pointing fingers number o'er and o'er,
When the kind virgin burns with secret shame,
Dies to consent, yet fears to own her flame;
Its shake triumphant, its victorious clap,
Its angry flutter, and its wanton tap?

HOOPS, STAYS, AND GARTERS

(From "The Art of Dancing")

Dare I in such momentous points advise,
I should condemn the hoop's enormous size:
Of ills I speak by long experience found,
Oft have I trod the immeasurable ground,
And mourned my shins bruised black with many a wound.

Nor should the tightened stay, too straitly laced,
In whalebone bondage gall the slender waist;
Nor waving lappets should the dancing fair,
Nor ruffles edged with dangling fringes wear;
Oft will the cobweb ornaments catch hold
On the approaching button rough with gold,
Nor force nor art can then the bonds divide,
When once th' entangled Gordian knot is tied.
So the unhappy pair, by Hymen's power,
Together joined in some ill-fated hour,
The more they strive their freedom to regain,
The faster binds the indissoluble chain.
Let each fair maid, who fears to be disgraced,
Ever be sure to tie her garters fast,
Lest the loosed string, amidst the public hall,
A wished-for prize to some proud fop should fall,
Who the rich treasure shall triumphant show,
And with warm blushes cause her cheeks to glow.

THE SPRIGHTLY DANCE

(From "The Art of Dancing")

But now behold, united hand in hand,
Ranged on each side, the well-paired couples stand!
Each youthful bosom beating with delight,
Waits the brisk signal for the pleasing sight;
While lovely eyes, that flash unusual rays,
And snowy bubbies pulled above the stays,
Quick busy hands, and bridling heads declare
The fond impatience of the starting fair.
And see, the sprightly dance is now begun!
Now here, now there, the giddy maze they run;
Now with slow steps they pace the circling ring,
Now all confused, too swift for sight they spring:

So in a wheel, with rapid fury tost,
The undistinguished spokes are in the motion lost.
The dancer here no more requires a guide,
To no strict steps his nimble feet are tied;
The muse's precepts here would useless be,
Where all is fancied, unconfined, and free . . .
As soon as one from his own comfort flies,
Another seizes on the lovely prize;
A while the favorite youth enjoys her charms,
Till the next comer steals her in his arms;
New ones succeed, the last is still her care;
How true an emblem of th' inconstant fair!

GOING HOME—THE UNWELCOME MORN

(From "The Art of Dancing")

Thus mixed with love, the pleasing toil pursue,
Till the unwelcome morn appears in view;
Then, when approaching day its beams displays,
And the dull candles shine with fainter rays;
Then, when the sun just rises o'er the deep,
And each bright eye is almost set in sleep;
With ready hand, obsequious youths prepare
Safe to her coach to lead each chosen fair,
And guard her from the morn's inclement air:
Let a warm hood enwrap her lovely head,
And o'er her neck a handkerchief be spread;
Around her shoulders let this arm be cast,
While that from cold defends her slender waist;
With kisses warm her balmy lips shall glow,
Unchilled by nightly damps or wint'ry snow;
While gen'rous white wine, mulled with ginger warm
Safely protects her inward frame from harm.
But ever let my lovely pupils fear

To chill their mantling blood with cold small beer.
Ah, thoughtless fair! the tempting draught refuse,
When thus forewarned by my experienced muse:
Let the sad consequence your thoughts employ,
Nor hazard future pains for present joy;
Destruction lurks within the pois'nous dose,
A fatal fever or a pimpled nose.

FUTILITY

A while through justling crowds we toil, and sweat,
And eagerly pursue we know not what;
Then when our trifling short-lived race is run,
Quite tired sit down, just where we first begun.

AN ESSAY ON VIRTUE

(To the Hon. Phillip York, Esq.)

. . . Would we but search for what we were designed,
And for what end th' Almighty formed mankind;
A rule of life we then should plainly see,
For to pursue that end must Virtue be.
Then what is that? Not want of power, or fame,
Or worlds unnumbered to applaud his name,
But a desire his blessings to diffuse,
And fear lest millions should existence lose;
His goodness only could his power employ,
And an eternal warmth to propagate his joy.
Hence soul and sense diffused through ev'ry place
Make happiness as infinite as space;
Thousands of suns beyond each other blaze,
Orbs roll o'er orbs, and glow with mutual rays;
Each is a world, where, formed with wondrous art,
Unnumbered species live through ev'ry part:
In every tract of ocean, earth, and skies,

Myriads of creatures still successive rise:
Scarce buds a leaf, or springs the vilest weed,
But little flocks upon its verdure feed:
No fruit our palate courts, or flow'r our smell,
But on its fragrant bosom nations dwell,
All formed with proper faculties to share
The daily bounties of their Maker's care:
The great Creator from his heav'nly throne
Pleased on the wide-expanded joy looks down,
And his eternal law is only this,
That all contribute to the general bliss.
Nature so plain this primal law displays,
Each living creature sees it, and obeys;
Each, formed for all, promotes through private care
The public good, and justly takes its share.
All understand their great Creator's will,
Strive to be happy, and in that fulfil;
Mankind excepted, lord of all beside,
But only slave to folly, vice, and pride;
'T is he that 's deaf to this command alone,
Delights in other's woe, and courts his own:
Racks and destroys with tort'ring steel and flame,
For luxury, brutes, and man himself for fame;
Sets superstition high on virtue's throne,
Then thinks his Maker's temper like his own:
Hence are his altars stained with reeking gore,
As if he could atone for crimes by more:
Hence whilst offended Heav'n he strives in vain
T' appease by fasts and voluntary pain,
Ev'n in repenting he provokes again.
How easy is our yoke! how light our load!
Did we not strive to mend the laws of God:
For his own sake no duty can he ask,

The common welfare is our only task:
For this sole end his precepts, kind as just,
Forbid intemp'rance, murder, theft, and lust,
With ev'ry act injurious to our own
Or other's good, for such are crimes alone:
For this are peace, love, charity enjoined,
With all that can secure and bless mankind.
Thus is the public safety virtue's cause,
And happiness the end of all her laws;
For such by nature is the human frame,
Our duty and our interest are the same.
"But hold," cries out some Puritan divine,
Whose well-stuffed cheeks with ease and plenty shine,
"Is this to fast, to mortify, refrain?
And work salvation out with fear and pain?"
We own the rigid lessons of their schools
Are widely diff'rent from these easy rules:
Virtue, with them, is only to abstain
From all that nature asks, and covet pain;
Pleasure and vice are ever near a-kin,
And if we thirst, cold water is a sin:
Heaven's path is rough and intricate, they say,
Yet all are damned that trip, or miss their way;
God is a being cruel and severe,
And man a wretch by his command placed here,
In sunshine for a while to take a turn,
Only to dry and make him fit to burn.

COULD I A FIRM PERSUASION

Could I a firm persuasion once attain,
That after death no being would remain;
To those dark shades I'd willingly descend,
Where all must sleep, this drama at an end,

Nor life accept, although renewed by fate,
Ev'n from its earliest to its happiest state.
Might I from fortune's bounteous hand receive
Each boon, each blessing in her power to give,
Genius, and science, morals, and good sense,
Unenvied honours, wit, and eloquence;
A num'rous offspring to the world well known.
Both for paternal virtues, and their own;
Ev'n at this mighty price I'd not be bound
To tread the same dull circle round and round;
The soul requires enjoyments more sublime,
By space unbounded, undestroyed by time.

THE WAY TO BE WISE

(Imitated from La Fontaine)

Poor Jenny, am'rous, young, and gay,
Having by man been led astray,
 To nunnery dark retired;
There lived and looked so like a maid,
So seldom eat, so often prayed,
 She was by all admired.

The Lady Abbess oft would cry,
If any sister trod awry,
 Or proved an idle slattern;
"See wise and pious Mrs. Jane!
A life so strict, so grave a mien
 Is sure a worthy pattern."

A pert young slut at length replies,
"Experience, madam, makes folks wise;
 'T is that has made her such;
And we, poor souls, no doubt should be
As pious and as wise as she,
 If we had seen as much!"



STEPHEN DUCK

1705-1756

IN THE year 1730 appeared a thin book of verse entitled "Poems on Several Subjects: written by Stephen Duck—lately a poor thresher in a Barn in the County of Wilts, at the Wages of Four Shillings and Six Pence per Week: which were publickly read in the drawing room at Windsor Castle, on Friday, the 11th of September 1730 to her Majesty—who was thereupon most graciously pleased to take the author into her royal protection, by allowing him a salary of thirty pounds per annum, and a small house at Richmond to live in, for the better support of himself and family."

This volume was a pirated one: "a knavish bookseller got hold of his verse, that had been circulated in mss. and published it with a fictitious picture of the author, wherein he is represented with Milton in one hand and a flail in the other coming from the barn towards a table on which pen, ink, and paper are lying; pigs, poultry, and reapers making up the rural accompaniments." . . .

Stephen Duck was "born of parents remarkable only for honesty and industry . . . he had some small share of reading and writing bestowed upon him, with little or no grammar; for before he had reached his syntaxis, his mother had a very notable complaint exhibited against him by his school-master, viz. that he took his learning too fast, even faster than the master could give it him. So that the Prudent Parent, to prevent so growing an evil, removed her son from

School to the Plow, lest he might become too fine a gentleman for the family that produced him." . . .

But "the seeds of learning once sowed in the young plowman, there was no possibility of weeding them out." . . .

"Milton was his constant companion in field and barn: he would work harder than his companions to gain a respite, when he might read . . . he also had the *Spectator* and *Bailey's English Dictionary*." . . .

"His wife thought him mad, hearing him declaiming his verses, and ran to tell the whole neighborhood he dealt with the Devil because he did nothing" . . . in his spare time . . . "but talk to himself and tell his fingers"—the poor fellow trying hard to bring the meter even!

Soon several of the gentry in the neighborhood took notice; he was helped because of his likability. News of him was brought to Queen Caroline.

The Queen made him keeper of her Select Library at Richmond, called "Merlin's Cave." . . .

With assiduous simplicity and modest endeavour, he worked his way up; entered the Church. He became a fashionable preacher, and his sermons were frequented because of the simple directness and scriptural honesty of his discourse.

His painful advance in scholarship is marked by the fact that he, too, in common with the other poets, tried his hand at translating Horace.

Naturally he was attacked. Grub Street rose against him with satire, pasquinade, libel, lampoon.

When, after Eusden's death, his name was faintly whispered for the laureateship—Swift himself was forward with a bitter thrust—

"Our dangerous state we all discern
And fetch dictators from the barn."

But Pope befriended him, with much liking for "the

honest, industrious thrasher, whose verse was no worse than the ponderous epics of Blackmore."

Duck's first wife, she who was reported to have proclaimed to the neighbours his allegiance to the Devil—died before she could enjoy the Queen's favour with him. Then he married the Queen's housekeeper at Kew. The Queen gave him, as a wedding present, "a purse of guineas and a fine gown."

When his friend, Queen Caroline, died, and when her death was followed by that of his other friend, Alexander Pope, their loss preyed on him and the faithful-hearted thrasher-poet went mad and drowned himself.

I think there were even a few heartless puns made on his name and his method of committing suicide!

"His was a muse of simple thought and manly strength; his poems are too few."

"He knew Milton by heart, esteeming him first of the English Poets. For a time he was suspected of being a fraud, that some one else wrote his verse for him."

Gray, in his "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton" is suspected of having remotely plagiarized Duck's "A Midsummer Wish" that appeared in "The Gentleman's Magazine," July, 1731. I have scrupulously compared the two poems, and cannot find the slightest resemblance to Duck's poem in the Ode—except that both writers laid the scene of their verses in the same neighbourhood and season of the year. Hence the description must needs be similar.

When Duck wrote

The thick, impetuous rain.—

and

Corn blown adverse with the rustling wind.—

he was not far from writing good verse.



STEPHEN DUCK

He was at his best in his poem—"The Happy Farmer."
Where he sang of the severe labour on the farm that he
knew: not delivering himself of a lackadaisical pastoral with
nymphs and shepherds lounging gracefully—

Duck's one saying:

There's always Bitter mingled with the Sweet.—

THE THRESHERS

Divested of our clothes, with flail in hand,
At a just distance front to front we stand . . .
From the strong planks our crabtree staves rebound
And echoing planks return the rattling sound.
Now in the air our knotty weapons fly,
And now with equal force descend from high:
Down one, one up, so well they keep the time,
The Cyclops' hammers could not truer chime. . . .
In briny streams our sweat descends apace,
Drops from our locks or trickles down our face . . .
The Shepherd well may tune his voice to sing,
Inspired by all the beauties of the Spring:
No fountains murmur here, no lambkins play,
No linnets warble and no fields look gay. . . .
When sooty pease we thresh, you scarce can know
Our native colour, as from work we go;
The sweat, and dust, and suffocating smoke,
Make us so much like Ethiopians look;
We scare our wives, when evening brings us home;
And frightened infants think the Bug Bear come.

TO THE MOWING

The birds salute us as to work we go,
And a new life seems in our breasts to glow,
Across one's shoulder hangs a scythe well-steeled,

The weapon destined to unclothe the field: 1
 T'other supports the whetstone, scrip, and beer,
 That, for our scythes, and these, ourselves to cheer. . .
 Often we whet, as often view the sun,
 To see how near his tedious race is run;
 At length he veils his radiant face from sight,
 And bids the weary traveller good-night;
 Homewards we move, but so much spent with toil,
 We walk but slow, and rest at every stile.
 Our good, expecting wives, who think we stay,
 Got to the door, soon eye us in the way;
 Then from the pot the dumpling's caught in haste,
 And homely by its side the bacon's placed.
 Supper and sleep by morn new strength supply,
 And out we set our works again to try . . .
 Thus as the year's revolving course goes round
 No respite from our labour can be found:
 Like Sisyphus, our work is never done,
 CONTINUALLY ROLLS BACK THE RESTLESS STONE!

In this long poem there are presented many homely and quick-eyed observations—like the following—

Behind our backs the female gleaners wait
 Who sometimes stoop, and sometimes hold a chat.

POVERTY

There is no ill on earth which mortals fly
 With so much dread as abject poverty.
 Strange terror of mankind! by thee misled,
 Not conscience, quicksands, rocks, or death they dread.
 And yet thou art no formidable foe,
 EXCEPT TO LITTLE SOULS, WHO THINK THEE SO!



SAMUEL JOHNSON

1709-1784

ESSENTIALLY a prose writer, incidentally a poet,—he began his career with verse . . . the great, burly-shouldered, godly, pock-marked dictator of English Letters . . . he of the dictionary . . . he who shoved porters aside on the street . . . who shunned and despised patronage, especially the belated patronage of Lord Chesterfield; rebuffing the latter with his famous letter, about no pilot being needed, when the ship already rides safe at anchor. . . .

Johnson doesn't rightly belong here, but I can't help quoting an eight-lined poem of the bluff, honest, bigoted Doctor's, entitled—

IMITATION OF THE STYLE OF—

“Hermit hoar, in solemn cell
Wearing out life's evening grey;
Strike thy bosom sage, and tell
What is bliss, and which the way.”
Thus I spoke, and speaking, sighed,
Scarce repressed the starting tear,
When the hoary sage replied
“Come, my lad, and have some beer.”



FRANCIS HOYLAND

Circa 1735

THOUGH many odes to the nightingale have been written by English poets, there is, of course, only *one* "Ode to a Nightingale" . . . Keats' poem of that name . . . but the author of the particular "ode" that follows, enjoys, to my mind, the distinction of having had Keats echo and transmute his thin, personal silver of verse into that golden stuff of which enduring masterpieces are shapen.

Of the author of this obscure "Ode to a Nightingale" there is little known biographically beyond the few meagre facts that he was born sometime between the years 1710 and 1725; that he was a bachelor of arts at Cambridge; that he suffered the traditional unfortunate poverty and neglect that has fallen to many young poets not strong enough in fibre nor great enough in genius, to endure the rough usage of this practical and unvisionary world; that, according to his verse, he suffered also from the greater ill of arrogant and meddling patronage, until he wished himself well rid of it, and, in his own words, cast back upon "his crust of bread and liberty."

From other passages in his slight remains, it seems that he was sorrowing father to a child that died; and, it is gathered from the same source, that he went on a voyage for his health to the Leeward Islands. . . .

He died of consumption at the age of twenty-six. . . .

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

Coy bird of eve! whose solitary note
I catch imperfect from a spray remote
(While numerous echoes down the dale
Convey the melancholy tale);
Still nearer to my lonely cell
Bring all thy woes, sweet Philomel!

Around that cell no verdant bowers
With careless elegance inwove,
Or shrubs adorned with early flowers,
Exhaling fragrance, court thy love;
Yet think not to a heedless ear
Thy throat will vainly warble here;
Thy liquid lays enchant my soul
Wakeful as yonder starry pole:
Then nearer to my lonely cell
Bring all thy woes, sweet Philomel!

If I deny the hospitable bough,
(Foe to the pensive genius of the shades)
 May yonder beechen glades
Their salutary gloom no more display
To intercept the dogstar's fiery ray
 From my devoted brow!

May never music soothe my breast,
But the funereal bird unblessed
Harrow with shrieks that fright the dawning day!
Witness, ye neighbouring valleys green!
Do I not rove where woodbines twine
And call each branching oak divine,
Enraptured with the sylvan scene?
Then nearer to my lonely cell
Bring all thy woes, sweet Philomel!

Were once my ardent wishes crowned
 A new Elysium waving round
 Would empty every forest nigh
 Of all their native melody;
 But Fate, inexorable Fate,
 Not even thy sounds can mitigate:
 Then pardon, gentle bird, the wrong,
 And, at my window perching light,
 Pour thy sweet breast; attentive night
 Will o'er these bounds her solemn reign prolong!

It was in 1763 that the poems of Hoyland were first printed, in quarto pamphlet. Later, in 1769, five of his odes (and Keats' important odes were five in number) because of their slight but authentic silver worth, were brought out in small octavo, by the distinctive Strawberry Hill Press. It is possible that Keats might have come upon this latter volume either in the library of Hunt or in that of Charles Cowden Clarke, if he didn't himself light upon a copy on one of the London bookstalls. . . .

A brief jotting-down of some of the points of similarity between the two odes, the one by the great and famous poet, the other, by the versifier whose fame was still-born and deservedly shall never know re-animation:

Hoyland—"Beechen glades"; Keats—"Beechen green"—

Hoyland—"May yonder BEECHEN glades

Their salutary GLOOM no more display"—

Keats, after "BEECHEN green" adds the echo-word to GLOOM, VIZ. SHADOW(s), in the expression "Shadows numberless," while, further on, he uses the word "GLOOM" in the plural, in—"Verdurous GLOOMS and winding mossy ways."

Where Hoyland writes "NEIGHBOURING VALLEYS green" Keats echoes "In the NEXT VALLEY-glades."

Hoyland—"I catch imperfect from a spray remote"; Keats, less closely, in the direct verbal sense, but just as near in the imaginative—"Thy plaintive anthem fades" . . . passim. . . .

Hoyland—

Yet think not to a HEEDLESS EAR
Thy throat will VAINLY warble here.

Keats—

"Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain."

Note the similarity in poetic feeling between Hoyland's "Witness, ye neighbouring valleys green"—passim, and Keats' magnificent passage beginning—"I cannot see what flowers are at my feet!"

Earlier in his ode Keats reverses the procedure of Hoyland's fancy: Hoyland expresses the wish that he could draw the nightingale nearer to the window of his "cell," whereas Keats, antithetically, wishes to "dissolve," to "fade far away," and, with the magic singing of the bird "quite forget . . . the weariness, the fever, and the fret" of mortal life.

Hoyland, the literary amateur, merely makes the statement—"Thy liquid lays enchant my soul," but Keats speaks direct enchantment, with—"Magic casements opening on the foam

of perilous seas,
in faery lands forlorn."

putting to masterly use the metre of the identical short line that occurs twice in Hoyland's second stanza; musically weaving it into the regular stanzaic scheme of his ode.

Hoyland's two short lines are "May yonder beechen glades" and "From my devoted brow"; Keats, dropping into the same metrical slot: "In some melodious plot"—"And purple-stained mouth"—and so on, as a uniform eighth line.



EDWARD LOVIBOND

-1775

LOVIBOND, whose name, to my mind, has a poetic sound . . . like that of Kynaston, the Carolinian poet, or Marmion . . . was an obscure country gentleman of means who led a quiet life and left no personal history behind, beyond a few scattered particulars.

His father was an esquire and gentleman of fortune—and a man obscurer than his son . . . for his first name is not known.

Lovibond, the author of "The Tears of Old May Day," was privately educated by a minister, one Rev. Mr. Woodeson; this divine "who preserved to his death such a simplicity of manners as is rarely to be met with," exerted an influence for unostentatious retirement and gentle suppression of anything but the mildest motions of the personality, on Lovibond . . . and the poet remained one of those gentle, harmless, social beings then prevalent in the upper middle classes, in the milieu of which either sex considered the use of the word "leg" as indecent.

"Preferring scenes of shade and silence" Lovibond remained in the neighbourhood of Hampton, "dividing his time between the occupations of rural economy, the amusements of literature and poetry, and the 'gaities of elegant society.'"

In the gentleman's fashion, his poems were circulated privately in the manuscript during his life. His brother gave them into the hands of a publisher after his death.

No one knows what the poet looked like.

The greatest excitement he allowed himself, perhaps, was in writing "The Tears of Old May Day" in protest against the reformation of the English Calendar to conform with the general usage of the rest of Europe.

This poem was at one period compared with Gray's "Elegy," and Lovibond's "Julia's Printed Letter to Lord B——," with Pope's "Eloisa."

Keats must have had the fifth stanza of "The Tears of Old May Day" somewhere in the back of his mind, when he sat down, while everybody else about him was talking gaily, and dashed off his sonnet dedicating his first volume to Leigh Hunt—

Keats—

"Glory and loveliness have passed away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathéd incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft-voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May," etc.

Lovibond—

No more in choral bands unite
Her (May's) virgin votaries, and at early dawn,
Sacred to May and love's mysterious rite,
Brush the light dewdrops from the spangled grass . . .
Nor fresh-blown garlands village maids provide,
A purer off'ring at her rustic shrine.—

Lovibond's "On the Subject of the Monument in Arcadia" suggests somewhat of the melancholy simplicity and

pastoral gentleness of Collins' exquisite "Dirge in Cymbeline"—was doubtless inspired by Collins' poem . . . a reversal of the game in which the major poet takes from the less-known.

We find in Lovibond, as in all the obscure poets, the same trite, rubberstamp use of the adjective . . . an adjective, it seems, must march with every noun; there must fall the trick of rounding out the full length of the line by fitting in almost any congruous adjective that possesses the right number of syllables. The trite epithet spelt the doom, for a long time, of the minor poet. It remained for Keats to renew the use of the adequate adjective. Though the greatest poetry spares qualification of the noun . . . witness the parables of Christ, and the book of Job. . . .

The sole lines of Lovibond that I have seen quoted—

Easy the traitor wins an open heart
Artless itself, and unsuspecting art.

TO KITTY

Why, Kitty, with that tender air,
Those eyes to earth inclined,
Those timid blushes? why despair
Of empire o'er mankind?

Ah, know, that beauty's surest arms
Are candour, softness, ease!
Your sweet distrust of pleasing charms
Is half the charm to please.

ON A VERY FINE LADY

Fine B—— observes no other rules
Than those the coterie prize;
She thinks, whilst lords continue fools,
'T is vulgar to be wise:

Thinks rudeness wit in noble dames,
Adultery, love polite;
That ducal stars shoot brighter flames
Than all the host of light.

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE MONUMENT IN ARCADIA

O you, that dwell where shepherds reign,
Arcadian youths, Arcadian maids,
To pastoral pipe who danced the plain,
Why pensive now beneath the shades?

“Approach her virgin tomb,” they cry,
Behold the verse inscribed above,
‘Once too in Arcady was I!’—
Behold what dreams are life and love!”



WILLIAM SHENSTONE

1714-1763

WHEN William Shenstone inherited a small but adequate income from his father, on the latter's death,—he repaired to London and to the fashionable watering place of Bath to make his dent in the beau monde.

But his "parts" were not sparkling enough to create the furore he expected, among the Fashionable and Witty.

With as much pique as his slack, fat, kindly nature could allow, he retired to his estate of Leasowes and there gave himself over to a life of affected pastoral ease.

He devoted his muse to the task of extolling the Country's simplicity and quiet, in the usual conventional verse of the type; its honesty and wholeness of incorrupt heart . . . inversely he attacked the City and Court for their cynicism, cruelty, sophistication, and corruption. . . .

But his true business proved not to be his poetry, but the cultivation of his estate, the landscape and buildings of which he turned into a thing of famous beauty.

Walks, dells, lawns, brakes, fountains, meadows, winding brooks and rivulets; delightful waterfalls come upon unexpectedly; carefully manoeuvred distant prospects of village, hill, and neighbouring valley, held and enchanted the eye of the strolling visitor. . . .

True to the artificial taste of the age, he had grottoes made in which were set tablets inscribed with verse to his friends, famous or obscure, and to the memory of famous poets of classical times. . . .

While he set himself up in condemnation of the world's struggle for preferment and fame, there lurked a pathos in the eagerness with which he welcomed to Leasowes those who had succeeded in that struggle—each passing man of reputation, each day's celebrity who turned aside to view the poet's craft in landscape-gardening, and to enjoy his hospitality. . . .

Shenstone's extreme hurt from the world showed itself in the careful manner with which he seldom shook hands, in order not to invite familiarity.

In person Shenstone was increasingly fat, and a trifle over the middle stature . . . he affected clothes that he thought fitted his nature . . . not following the prescribed fashions . . . he wore a suit of white with silver trimmings. . . .

He wrote many a love-poem to a certain Delia, whom he might easily have won; since he was a man of secure property, and she, a maiden not insensible to domestic security. . . .

But such were Shenstone's feeble velleities of life, that he never once dared approach her with proposals of matrimony. . . .

Instead, the slave of propinquity, he took, in a weak and lonely hour, the woman nearest at hand . . . his house-keeper; who proved, later, the indirect cause of his death. . . .

For, one evening, in a huff that was unusual for him, after having had a lover's quarrel with her—he rushed out into the air and spent the night in a coach of his that stood in the frosty roadway. And there he caught the chill which brought on the sickness that resulted in his demise. . . .

It was found that he had thoughtfully provided for all

his servants. . . . For his housekeeper, who had been his life-long, faithful mistress; despite their frequent tiffs,—for her he provided best of all. . . .

In his day and age Shenstone was over-famous for his poetry, ranking for a while among the greatest. . . .

Today only those poems strike fire that are light and humourous,—not didactic, moral, and ostentatiously expressive of the “taste” and “sense” of the Time. . . .

There was a to-us-ludicrous portraiture of Shenstone, as a frontispiece to his collected works: there he stands, the fat poet, fully clothed in his silver coat and knee breeches, before a classic outdoor altar, whilst Apollo, naked, fronts him, crowning him with laurel.

SLENDER'S GHOST

Beneath a churchyard yew,
Decayed and worn with age,
At dusk of eve methought I spied
Poor Slender's ghost, that whimpering cried,
“O sweet! O sweet Anne Page!”

Ye gentle bards! give ear,
Who talk of amorous rage,
Who spoil the lily, rob the rose,
Come learn of me to weep your woes:
“O sweet! O sweet Anne Page!”

Why should such laboured strains
Your formal muse engage?
I never dreamed of flame or dart,
That fired my breast or pierced my heart,
But sighed “O sweet Anne Page!”

And you, whose lovesick minds
No medicine can assuage,



FRONTISPIECE TO SHENSTONE'S COLLECTED WORKS

Accuse the leech's art no more,
But learn of Slender to deplore;
"O sweet, O sweet Anne Page!"

And you who boast or grieve
What horrid wars ye wage,
Of wounds received from many an eye,
Yet mean as I do, when I sigh,
"O sweet! O sweet Anne Page!"

THE PROGRESS OF ADVICE

Says Richard to Thomas—and seemed half-afraid—
"I am thinking to marry thy mistress's maid;
Now because Mrs. Lucy to thee is well known,
I will do 't if thou bidst me, or let it alone.

Nay, don't make a jest on't; 't is no jest to me;
For 'faith I'm in earnest; so, prithee, be free.
I have no fault to find with the girl since I knew her,
But I'd have thy advice ere I tied myself to her."

Said Thomas to Richard, "to speak my opinion,
There is not such a devil in George's dominion;
And I firmly believe, if thou knew'st her as I do,
Thou wouldst choose out a whipping post first to be tied to.

"She 's peevish, she 's thievish, she 's ugly, she 's old,
And a liar, and a fool, and a slut, and a scold"—
Next day Richard hastened to church, and was wed,
And ere night had informed her what Thomas had said.



WILLIAM WHITEHEAD

1714-1785

WHITEHEAD's father was one Richard Whitehead, a baker who baked all the bread served at the College of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge . . . "a mad fellow, who neglected his business at the oven, to ornament, rather than cultivate, according to the taste of the age indulged in by gentlemen,—a few acres of land near the neighbouring village of Grantchester . . . which still goes by the name of 'Whitehead's folly.' " . . .

The baker's son inherited his father's desire to be a gentleman . . . this boy of delicate constitution, by a sort of gracious instinct—not through being a truckler—found his school friends among the young noblemen and gentlemen of large fortune . . . and was himself sought out by them—friendships to continue beyond school and college. . . .

His feminine appearance got him to act the women's parts in school plays.

At Winchester when forced to walk in the hills, with the other boys, for exercise,—he went apart, and spent the hours of allotted outing, reading either plays or poetry. In the school poetical exercises, he covered pages with voluntary verse, where his comrades laboured out their dozen lines.

Pope, on a visit to Cambridge, noticed favourably a poem of the boy's. He imitated Pope's style . . . and the author of the "Dunciad" approved his "On the Danger of Writing Verse" because it was the happiest imitation of his style he had seen.

His father died; as a student, Whitehead lived with the strictest application and frugality, taking loving care not to put his widowed mother to superfluous expense.

Out in the world, he dedicated all his plays and poems, without obsequiousness, and as a matter of course, to people of quality . . . he became private tutor to the son of the Earl of Jersey . . . and through Lady Jersey obtained the Order of Bath. . . .

The poet-laureateship that Gray refused, after Cibber's death,—Whitehead accepted . . . but, when informed he might employ deputies to write his annual odes, he replied that he "would not make the office he had assumed, a sine-cure . . . reserving his pen for certain great occasions that might occur, such as a peace or a marriage."

It was years before he left the family of Lord Jersey, where he was tenderly received and loved, in intimate friendship.

This man of good breeding and humanity, who by instinct sought out, and lived under, protective intimacy with the great, died as gently as he had passed his active days . . . he died leaning on the arm of a servant . . . going away from his table . . . in his private lodgings. . . .

Subject to many attacks in his position of poet-laureate, Churchill was especially bitter against him . . . he refused to retaliate . . . Garrick was afraid to put on a tragedy of his, for all of two years, because of Churchill's enmity.

Whitehead thought more of a competence and retirement into quiet surroundings, than of any translunary fame. . . .

"My humbler, weaker verse

From scantier rills diffusing wholesome draughts . . .

Let me, O let me, ere the tempest roar,

Catch the first gale, and make the nearest shore;

In sacred silence join the inglorious train,

Where humble peace and sweet contentment reign.”

His was an honest, work-a-day muse. His qualities were better than the credit he was given for them.

Whitehead’s sayings—

Verse and virtue are their own reward.—

Hide ill-nature under virtue’s name.—

They court the insult who but seem afraid.—

Zeal for God’s sake sometimes plays the Devil.—

That first of blessings, how to dine.

ON RIDICULE

No truth so sacred, banter cannot hit,

No fool so stupid, but he aims at wit.

Ev’n those, whose breasts ne’er planned one virtuous deed,

Nor raised a thought beyond the earth they tread;

Ev’n those can censure, those can dare deride,

A Bacon’s av’rice, or a Tully’s pride.

SUPERIOR TALENTS ON THE GREAT BESTOWED

Superior talents, on the great bestowed,

Are heaven’s peculiar instruments of good:

Not for the few, who have them, are designed:

What flows from heaven must flow for all mankind.

Blush then, ye peers, who, niggards of your store,

Brood o’er the shining heap, not make it more;

Or Wilmot-like, at some poor fool’s expense,

Squander it with the sacred funds of sense.

Wisdom alone is true ambition’s aim,

Wisdom, the source of virtue and of fame,

Obtained with labour, for mankind employed,

And then, when most you share it, most enjoyed.

THE LARK—A SIMILE

See how the lark, the bird of day,
Springs from the earth, and wings her way!
To heaven's high vault her course she bends,
And sweetly sings as she ascends.
But when, contented with her height,
She shuts her wings, and checks her flight,
No more she chants the melting strain,
But sinks in silence to the plain. . . .
That larks are poets' birds, is known,
So make the case the poet's own,
And see him first from fields arise,
And pastoral scenes, to Cælia's eyes.
From thence the bold adventurer springs
To vaulted roofs, and courts, and kings.
Till having crowned his soaring lays
With something more than empty praise;
And, like his readers, learned aright
To mingle profit with delight;
He reads the news, he takes the air,
Or slumbers in his elbow chair.

TEMPERANCE

Temp'rance, not abstinence, in ev'ry bliss
Is man's true joy, and therefore Heaven's command.
The wretch who riots thanks his God amiss:
Who starves, rejects the bounties of his hand.

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF A YOUNG LADY FOUR YEARS OLD

Old creeping time, with silent tread,
Has stolen four years o'er Molly's head.
The rose-bud opens on her cheek,
The meaning eyes begin to speak;

And in each smiling look is seen
The innocence which plays within.
Nor is the fault'ring tongue confined
To lisp the dawnings of the mind,
But fair and full her words convey
The little all they have to say;
And each fond parent, as they fall,
Finds volumes in that little all.
May ev'ry charm which now appears,
Increase, and brighten with her years!
And may that same old creeping time
Go on till she has reached her prime,
Then, like a master of his trade,
Stand still, nor hurt the work he made.

IN A HERMITAGE—WITH A SKULL AND HOUR GLASS
STATIONED THEREIN

The man whose days of youth and ease
In nature's calm enjoyments passed,
Will want no monitors like these,
To torture and alarm his last.
The gloomy grot, the cypress shade,
The zealot's list of rigid rules,
To him are merely dull parade,
The tragic pageantry of fools.
What, life affords he freely tastes,
When nature calls, resigns his breath;
Nor age in weak repining wastes,
Nor acts alive the farce of death.
Not so the youths of folly's train,
Impatient of each kind restraint
Which parent nature fixed in vain,
To teach us man's true bliss, content.
For something still beyond enough

With eager impotence they strive,
Till appetite has learned to loathe
The very joys by which we live.
Then, filled with all which sour disdain
To disappointed vice can add,
Tired of himself, man flies from man,
And hates the world he made so bad.



RICHARD JAGO

1715-1781

A CLERGYMAN, and the son of a clergyman who had a very large family and was in poor circumstances.

The young poet, to obtain an education, was compelled to enter Cambridge as a servitor or sizer: a class of student who, while pursuing his studies, waited on the needs of the wealthier members of the college, and was regarded as somewhat of a social pariah.

At Cambridge Shenstone became Jago's devoted friend; though, yielding to the pressure of collegiate snobbery, he could only visit him in private; it being deemed too great a disparagement for a Commoner to be seen consorting with one who wore a servitor's gown.

In after-days Jago throve not badly, falling into the way of several good "livings."

Jago kept up a correspondence with his friend Shenstone till the latter's mortal illness overtook him; which, as we have seen, began with a cold caught in the coach in the roadway, after his famous quarrel with his housekeeper-mistress.

Jago imitated Shenstone's care of Leasowes, by the care he, too, took of his vicarage and its adjacent grounds.

His friend Shenstone, secretly ambitious to move prominently in the world of literary fashion, while affecting a pastoral content, could break out in this manner:

"Tedious again to curse the drizzling day!

Again to trace the wintry tracks of snow!

Or soothed by vernal airs, again survey

The selfsame hawthorns bud, and cowslips blow!"

—there spoke the true inner man, confessing weariness, above all things, in the renewal of the hawthorn and cowslip! . . .

Jago, for his part, was delightedly satisfied with his vicarage quiet . . . where he accurately observed nature and loved her . . . writing the long didactic poem "Edge-Hill" . . . thus putting himself among the poets of locality, with Dyer, Denham, Pope, and others. . . .

His "Elegy on the Blackbirds" brought him his brief day of fame; printed anonymously in Dodsley's "Miscellany," it was first claimed by "a manager of the Bath Theatre," who boasted among his friends that he had written it . . . later it was ascribed to the poet West, by Dr. Johnson. . . .

Jago was a man of middle stature; shy, when not with intimate friends; he married twice; his first wife brought him a multitude of children, his second, none. . . .

"In domestic life he was the affectionate husband, the tender parent, the kind master, the hospitable neighbour, the sincere friend,—and, both by his doctrine and example, a faithful and worthy minister of the parish over which he presided."

His poems contained "very suitable reflections, religious and moral"—reflections, I might add, haled in by the scruff of the neck . . . not that the poet should not preach . . . for Baudelaire preaches, when he chants the joys of rolling in the iridescent welter of the gutter; just as much as Tennyson preaches, when he descants on the honourableness of tarrying in celibacy till one has acquired a competence before entering into a marriage with the fair-haired, rose-checked English virgin who has also patiently abode the marital event . . . both these poets are great . . . and

both succeeded in their preaching, their moral or unmoral moralizings, because their didacticism was woven into the body and texture of their poetry—not merely tagged on!

A second fault Jago shared with the minor poets—he also padded out his verse with trite adjectives: an ill that sickened in much of the verse, from the lapse of the Elizabethan song-writer, to the rise of Keats—

Examples of this fault, from Jago—

IN PURPLE vestments clad, the TEMPERED sky
Invites us from our HOSPITABLE roof
To taste her influence MILD; while to the west
The JOJUND sun his RADIANT chariot drives,
With RAPID course.—etc., etc., etc.

Tennyson must have retained some reminiscence of Jago's description of Godiva's ride, when he wrote his "Godiva." . . .

Tennyson—

"So left alone, the passions of her mind
Made war upon each other for an hour
Till pity won"—

Jago—

Again, within Godiva's gentle breast
New tumults rose. At length her female fears
Gave way, and sweet humanity prevailed.—

Jago's sayings—

Nor is it thinking much, but doing
That keeps our tenements from ruin.—
Providence, by instruments despised,
All human force and policy confounds.

SHAKESPEARE'S AVON

Hail, beauteous Avon, hail! on whose fair banks
The smiling daisies and their sister tribes,
Violets, and cuckoo-buds, and lady-smocks,
A brighter dye disclose, and proudly tell
That Shakespeare, as he strayed these meads among,
Their simple charms admired, and in his verse
Preserved, in never-fading bloom to live.
And thou, whose birth these walls unrivalled boast,
That mockest the rules of the proud Stagyrite,
And learning's tedious toil, hail mighty bard,
Thou great magician, hail! thy piercing thought
Unaided, saw each movement of the mind. . . .
Humour and wit, the tragic pomp or phrase
Familiar flowed, spontaneous to thy tongue . . .

Thy potent spells
From their bright seats aerial sprites detained,
Or from their unseen haunts, and slumbering shades
Awaked the fairy tribes, with jocund step
The circled green, and leafy hall to tread:
While, from his dripping caves, old Avon sent
His willing naiads to their harmless rout.
Alas, how languid is the laboured song,
The slow result of rules, and tortured sense,
Compared with thine! thy animated thought,
And glowing phrase! which art in vain essays,
And schools can never teach.

GODIVA RIDES

Go now, and lay thy modest garments by:
In naked beauty, mount thy milk-white steed,
And through the streets, in face of naked day,
And gazing slaves, their fair deliverer, ride! . . .
Again within Godiva's gentle breast

New tumult rose. At length her female fears
Gave way, and sweet humanity prevailed,
Reluctant, but resolved, the matchless fair
Gives all her naked beauty to the sun:
Then mounts her milk-white steed, and, through the streets,
Rides fearless; her dishevelled hair a veil!
That o'er her beauteous limbs luxuriant flowed,
Nursed by long fate for this important day!
Prostrate to earth th' astonished vassals bow,
Or to their inmost privacies retire,
All but one prying slave! who fondly hoped,
With venial curiosity, to gaze
On such a wondrous dame. But foul disgrace
O'ertook the bold offender, and he stands,
By just decree, a spectacle abhorred,
And lasting monument of swift revenge
For thoughts impure, and beauty's injured charms.

THE EXPELLED SCHOOLBOY

The boy of genuine parts and merit,
For some unlucky prank of spirit,
With frantic rage is scourged from school,
And branded with the name of fool,
Because his active blood flowed faster
Than the dull puddle of his master.
While the slow plodder trots along
Through thick and thin, through prose and song,
Insensible of all their graces,
But learned in words and common phrases;
Till in due time he's moved to college
To ripen these choice seeds of knowledge.

TO THE SWEETLY VACANT HOUR

Let others toil for wealth or power,
I court the sweetly vacant hour;
Down life's smooth current calmly glide,
Nor vexed with cares, nor racked with pride . . .
For thee I fly from vulgar eyes;
For thee I vulgar cares despise;
For thee ambition's charms resign;
Accept a votary wholly thine.

THE EARLY-RISER

While others, sunk in sleep, or live in vain,
Or, slaves of indolence, but wake to pain,
Me let the call of earliest birds invite
To hail the approaches of returning light;
To taste the freshness of the cheertul morn,
While shining dewdrops hang on every thorn.

ABSENCE

With leaden feet time creeps along
While Delia is away,
With her, nor plaintive was the song,
Nor tedious was the day.

Ah! envious power! reverse thy doom,
Now double thy career,
Strain ev'ry nerve, stretch ev'ry plume,
And rest them when she 's here.

WHAT ARE THESE, THEN?

What are these then, this eye, this ear,
But nicer organs found,
A glass to read, a trump to hear,
The modes of shape, or sound?

And blows may maim, or time impair
These instruments of clay,
And death may ravish what they spare,
Completing their decay.

But are these then that living power
That thinks, compares, and rules?
Then say a scaffold is a tower,
A workman is his tools.



NATHANIEL COTTON

1721-1770

AN EIGHTEENTH century poet of whom little is known—including absolutely nothing of his family, birthplace, and education—through the negligence of his first editor, who added, to his collected works, nothing biographically informative—

We know only that Nathaniel Cotton was a physician; through his letters we learn that at a very early age he began writing; that he suffered under the affliction of losing a wife that he loved; that he attended Young, the author of “Night Thoughts,” on his death-bed: poet-physician alleviating the last moments of poet-physician. . . .

There is, too, a letter of Cotton’s extant, which, amazingly both from the poet’s and physician’s viewpoint, portrays the gradual deterioration and slow, inevitable inroads that death effects, piecemeal, on age: now diminishing a sinew’s strength, now slaying a memory, now apparently striking darkness into the very soul itself:—

“My bed is often strewed with thorns,” writes the author of the easy, octasyllabic “Visions,” “but I must journey on through life upon the same terms that many wiser and better men than myself have done; and must reflect with some degree of comfort, that I am making hasty advances to that sanctuary ‘where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest.’ Oh! my heart strings, break not yet, out of pity to the worthier part of my family, who cannot lose me without suffering the greatest inconveniences.

"I have just passed three winters beyond the usual boundary appropriated to human life; and having thus transcended the longevity of the septuagenarian, I now labour under the inconveniences and evils of advanced years. I am emaciated to a very great degree, and my trembling limbs are so weak, as to feel insufficient to support my weight. The languors likewise which I suffer are so frequent and severe as to threaten an entire stop to the circulation, and are sometimes accompanied with that most distressful of all sensations, an anxiety circa præcordia. I sleep so little during the night, that, in general, I can rise up at the voice of the bird, be that period ever so early. Nor are my mental powers less deficient than my bodily strength; for my memory is notoriously impaired; and a subject which requires a little thought, becomes a burden hardly supportable . . . nor are you and I to wonder, that in our passage through this world . . . the weather and the ways grow worse, the longer we travel, and the nearer we approach to our journey's end. The sacred writer just now mentioned affirms, that when those comfortless days arrive, which are attended with satiety, disgust, and inquietude, we must expect the clouds to be often returning after the rain. Amid these melancholy scenes, it hath lately pleased Providence to bereave me of one of the best of daughters, who never gave me a moment's uneasiness, but at her death, and in that illness which led to it. I mean my daughter Kitty . . . but no more of this awful occurrence." . . .

Nathaniel Cotton was a feeble Gay.

YOU ASK WHAT PARTY

You ask what party I pursue?
Perhaps you mean "whose fool are you?"
The names of party I detest,
Badges of slavery at best!

I've too much grace to play the knave,
And too much pride to turn a slave.

WHO AGAINST HIMSELF COMBINES

But who against himself combines
Abets his enemy's designs.
When Rapine meditates a blow,
He shares the guilt who aids the foe.
Is man a thief who steals my pelf?
How great his theft, who robs himself!
Is man who gulls his friend, a cheat?
How heinous then is self-deceit!
Is murder justly deemed a crime?
How black his guilt, who murders time!

COMMON SENSE

The waking world has long agreed,
That Bagshot's not the road to Tweed:
And he who Berwick seeks through Staines,
Shall have his labour for his pains.

THE MISER

"Wealth cures my wants," the miser cries;
Be no deceived,—the miser lies;
One want he has, with all his store,
That worst of wants, the want of more.

'T IS THOUGHT MY "VISIONS"

'T is thought my Visions are too grave;
A proof I'm no designing knave.
Perhaps if In'trest held the scales,
I had devised quite different tales;
Had joined the laughing, low buffoon,

And scribbled satires and lampoon;
Or stirred each source of soft desire,
And fanned the coals of wanton fire;
Then had my paltry Visions sold,
Yes, all my dreams had turned to gold;
Had proved the darlings of the town,
And I—a poet of renown!

THE LAST SCENE

You know, the moral writers say
The world 's a stage, and life a play;
That in this drama to succeed,
Requires much thought, and toil indeed!
There still remains one labour more,
Perhaps a greater than before.
Indulge the search, and you shall find
The harder task is left behind;
That harder task, to quit the stage
In early youth, or riper age;
To leave the company and place,
With firmness, dignity, and grace . . .
Few greatly live in Wisdom's eye—
But oh! how few who greatly die!
Who, when their days approach an end,
Can meet the Foe, as friend meets friend!

JOY, A CELESTIAL FRUIT

Joys are a rich celestial fruit,
And scorn a sublunary root.
What wears the face of joy below,
Is often found but splendid woe.
Joys here, like unsubstantial fame,
Are nothings but a pompous name;

Or else like comets in the sphere,
Shine with destruction in their rear.

WHEN DANGERS MOST REMOTE

When dangers most remote appear,
Experience proves those dangers near.
Thus, boast of health whene'er you please,
Health is next neighbour to disease.
'T is prudence to suspect a foe,
And fortitude to meet the blow.
In wisdom's ranks he stands the first,
Who stands prepared to meet the worst.

A SONG

Tell me, my Cælia, why so coy,
Of men so much afraid;
Cælia, 't is better far to die
A mother than a maid. . . .

To vernal flowers the rolling years
Returning beauty bring;
But faded once, thou 'lt bloom no more,
Nor know a second spring.



JOHN GILBERT COOPER

1723-1769

JOHN GILBERT COOPER, who wrote "I cannot spare from happiness one single moment to be wise," was, nevertheless, a gentleman of great erudition; of an erudition that inclined him to vanity, and brought him into a fight with Warton, the literary historian.

It is told of the poetess daughter of Wesley, that she reached across the body of her dying infant, to compose a verse on the occasion. . . . There is a similar tale of Cooper, according to Boswell . . . "Mr. Fitzherbert, the father of the late Lord St. Helens, found Cooper one morning apparently in such violent agitation, on account of the indisposition of his second son, as to seem beyond power of comfort. At length, however, he exclaimed 'I'll write an elegy.' Mr. Fitzherbert, being satisfied by this of the severity of his emotions, slyly said, 'Had you not better take a postchaise, and go and see him?'"

Dr. Johnson doubted the truth of his story, as Cooper was said to be "one of the tenderest fathers in England."

I, for my part, have yet to accept the bourgeois imputation, that either Miss Wesley or John Gilbert Cooper showed callousness in desiring to write poetry about their dying or endangered offspring!

Cooper was an elegant dilettante, both by affectation and nature . . . "a gentleman of agreeable appearance, of polite address, and accomplished manners."

He was a humming-bird of song, and copied after the

French Dilettante School of Gresset. He considered his poems "trifles of philosophic pleasure composed in literary leisure."

One critic called Cooper the "sweet Farinelli of enervate song."

Dr. Johnson, while dubbing him "the Punchinello of Literature" did not withhold praise from his "Letters on Taste," in which Cooper declared that "constant attention to what is perfect and beautiful will by degrees harmonize the soul to responsive regularity and sympathetic order."

A LOVER OF FORTY

Dear Chloe, what means this disdain,
Which blasts each endeavour to please?
Though forty, I'm free from all pain,
Save love,—I am free from disease!
No graces my mansion have fled,
No muses have broken my lyre,—
The loves frolic still round my bed,
And laughter is cheered at my fire.
To none have I ever been cold,
All beauties in vogue I'm among;
I've appetite e'en for the old,
And spirit enough for the young.
Believe me, dear girl, I speak true,
Or else put my love to the test:
Some others have doubted like you,
Like them, do you bless and be blessed.

VIRTUE MOPES NOT

Virtue mopes not in the cell
Where cloistered pride and penance dwell,
But in the chariot of the loves

She triumphs, innocently gay,
Drawn by the yoked Idalian doves,
Whilst young affections lead the way
To the warm regions of the heart,
Whence selfish fiends of vice depart
Like sceptres at th' approach of day!

THE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE

Let worldlings hunt for happiness
With pain, anxiety, and strife,
Through every thorny way of life
And ne'er the ideal form possess. . . .
But I a surer way have found
To guide me o'er the mazy ground:
For, knowing well this deity
Must ever rove at liberty
Through Fancy's visionary road,
I never Wisdom's schemes employ
To find her in one fixed abode,
But where I meet her I enjoy;
And being free from strife and care,
Am sure to meet her everywhere!

ARISTIPPUS' DEFENSE

Whatever has the power to bless,
By living having learned to prize,
Since wisdom will afford me less
Than what from harmless follies rise,
I cannot spare from happiness
A single moment to be wise.



MARK AKENSIDE

1721-1770

SMALL, sturdy-hearted Michael Drayton was a butcher's son, and was never ashamed of his yeoman origin. Akenside, whose father was a butcher, was a snob, and suffered continual embarrassment from the knowledge of his origin.

When he was a child, his father's cleaver fell on one of his feet, and he received an injury that left him with a permanent limp.

An eloquent youth delighting in forensics, he was sent by the Dissenting Society of which he was a member, to Edinburgh to prepare for the ministry. At college he chose instead the pursuit of medicine . . . for a while considering a parliamentary career.

At an early age he fell in love, spending "three fruitless years" in "pursuit of the fair" . . . from hence dates his misogyny and embittered bachelorhood. . . .

Akenside's poetry was a thing of his youth; at the age of sixteen he had written "The Virtuoso," in Spenserian stanzas . . . and by eighteen, others of his best poems, for "The Gentleman's Magazine" . . . it was at this time, during long walks that he took, while on a visit to relatives, that he projected and composed his "Pleasures of the Imagination," "formed on the best models." . . .

He was in his early twenties when he submitted his masterpiece to Dodsley; and Pope, who was shown it, advised the amiable bookseller "to make no niggardly offer, for this was no every-day writer."

The publication of the poem won its author an immediate and splendid fame. . . . Akenside spent much of the leisure of his later life polishing, and worsening, his creation. . . .

Wordsworth's freedom from economic worry was assured through a legacy left him by his friend, Raisley Calvert . . . Beddoes owed his posthumous publication to his friend, Kelsey . . . Akenside's advance in the world came through the efforts of his friend, Dyson. . . .

Dyson bought the poet a house at Hampstead . . . then another in Bloomsbury, for the sole purpose of introducing the physician-author to persons of distinction. He settled three hundred pounds a year on him, "enabling him to keep a chariot."

Akenside rose to a high position in medicine, finally being appointed one of the physicians attending the Queen of George the Third. . . .

He was a dreadful being in the hospital over which he had charge . . . excessively stiff and formal, he checked smiling in the apartments of the sick, with a frown . . . once he had a patient removed who could not swallow a bolus with the bark on it; the patient dying in the process of removal.

Tyrannical in general toward all the sick;—because of his early disappointment in love, he evinced nothing short of disgust for the female patients. . . .

His personal neatness verged upon madness . . . on visiting days he ordered convalescent patients to sweep the way preceding him, with a broom . . . while, elegantly dressed . . . of a pale, strumous countenance . . . one leg shorter than the other, but the defect remedied by a false heel,—he rocked carefully along in his white wig, the long sword of the dandy by his side. . . .

He had a mania against spitting . . . never himself spat

nor allowed others to spit in his presence . . . when a hospital patient performed that forbidden act behind him, at a distance, Akenside wheeled and asked "who spat in my face?"

He was once rebuked by one of the Governors of the Hospital, who exclaimed indignantly, "Know thou art a servant of this Charity."

Pupils, however, followed him more heedfully than they did the more amiable and conciliatory Dr. Russell. . . .

This strange, sad being possessed such stiffness of manner that "he looked as if he could never be undressed" . . . he was a man of honest religion and strict celibate virtue . . . he never took a jest well . . . he lacked gaiety of heart entirely.

Smollett satirized him as the ode-writing doctor in "Peregrine Pickle." . . .

The debates he joined of evenings at Tom's Coffee House fixed him in his character of haughtiness and self-conceit.

His friend Dyson and he were as unlike as friends could be. The friendship of Wilkes and Churchill endured all tests . . . and that of Beddoes and Kelsey . . . the friendship between Dyson and Akenside suffered no abatement.

He was looked upon as very great.

For all his severity he was a "most unprejudiced and candid critic of contemporary poets."

A lover of Gothic architecture, he would be found, sitting by moonlight, on a bench in St. James Park, gazing in rapture at Westminster Abbey. . . .

His poetry held more of the cold shine of rhetorical beauty, than the warm glow of inspiration. Seldom does the lightning of ecstasy strike.

Walpole called him "a tame genius," Gosse, "a frozen Keats."

Akenside's sayings:—

Be thou thine own approver.—

What is man, at enmity with truth?—

The immortal mind, superior to his fate,
Amid the outrage of external things,
Firm as the solid base of this great world,
Rests on his own foundation.

TOO MUCH MY HEART

Too much my heart of beauty's power hath known,
Too long to Love hath reason left her throne;
Too long my genius mourned his myrtle chain,
And three rich years of youth consumed in vain,
Misled by sickly hope's deceitful flame,
Averse to action, and renouncing fame.
At last the visionary scenes decay,
My eyes, exulting, bless the new-born day,
Whose faithful beams detect the dangerous road
In which my heedless foot securely trod,
And strip the phantoms of their lying charms
That lured my soul from Wisdom's peaceful arms.
Are these delights that one would wish again?
Is this Elysium of a sober brain?
To wait for happiness in female smiles,
Bear all her scorns, be caught with all her wiles,
With prayers, with bribes, with lies, her pity crave,
Bless her hard bonds, and boast to be her slave;
To feel, for trifles, a distracting train
Of hopes and terrors, equally in vain;
This hour to tremble, and the next to glow,
Can pride, can sense, can reason, stoop so low? . . .
I bid adieu, then, to these woeful scenes:
I bid adieu to all the sex of queens;

Adieu to every suffering, simple soul
That lets a woman's will his ease control.
There laugh, ye witty; and rebuke, ye grave!
For me, I scorn to boast that I 'm a slave.
I bid the whining brotherhood be gone;
Joy to my heart! my wishes are my own.
Farewell the female heaven, the female hell;
To the great God of Love a glad farewell. . . .
I feel diviner fires my breast inflame,
To active science, and ingenuous fame;
Resume the paths my earliest choice began,
And lose, with pride, the lover in the man.

THE FOREBEING OF GOD

Ere the radiant sun
Sprung from the east, or mid the vault of night
The moon suspended her serener lamp;
Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorned the globe,
Or wisdom taught the sons of men her lore;
Then lived the Eternal One: then, deep-retired
In his unfathomed essence, viewed at large
The uncreated images of things;
The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
The mountains, woods, and streams, the rolling globe,
And Wisdom's form celestial. From the first
Of days, on them his love divine he fixed,
His admiration; till in time complete,
What he admired and loved, his vital smile
Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
Of life informing each organic frame;
Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves;
Hence light and shade alternate; warmth and cold;
And clear autumnal skies and vernal showers,
And all the fair variety of things.

THE SOUL'S ENJOYMENT

For, from the birth
Of mortal man, the Sovereign Maker said
That not in humble nor in brief delight,
Not in the fading echoes of renown,
Power's purple robes, nor pleasure's flowery lap,
The soul should find enjoyment; but from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Through all the ascent of things enlarge her view,
Till every bond at length should disappear,
And infinite perfection close the scene.

BUT LET NOT MAN'S IMPERFECT VIEWS

But let not man's imperfect views
Presume to tax wise Nature's laws;
'T is his with silent joy to use
The indulgence of the Sovereign Cause;
Secure that from the whole of things
Beauty and good consummate springs,
Beyond what he can reach to know,
And that the providence of Heaven
Has some peculiar blessing given
To each allotted state below.

HYMN TO CHEERFULNESS

Let Melancholy's plaintive tongue
Repeat what later bards have sung;
But thine was Homer's ancient might,
And thine victorious Pindar's flight:
Thy hand each Lesbian wreath attired:
Thy lips Sicilian reeds inspired:
Thy spirit lent the glad perfume
Whence yet the flowers of Teos bloom;

Whence yet from Tibur's Sabine vale
Delicious blows the enlivening gale,
While Horace calls thy sportive choir,
Heroes and nymphs, around his lyre . . .
O, thou, whose pleasing power I sing,
If right I touch the votive string,
If equal praise I yield thy name,
Still govern thou thy poet's flame;
Still with the Muse thy bosom share
And soothe to peace obtruding care.

TO A FRIEND, ON FRIENDSHIP WITH WOMEN

Once I remember, new to Love,
And dreading his tyrannic chain,
I sought a gentle maid to prove
What peaceful joys in friendship reign:
Whence we forsooth might safely stand,
And pitying view the lovesick band,
And mock the wingéd boy's malicious hand.

Thus frequent passed the cloudless day,
To smiles and sweet discourse resigned;
While I exulted to survey
One generous woman's real mind:
Till friendship soon my languid breast
Each night with unknown cares possessed,
Dashed my cold slumbers, or my dreams distressed.

Fool that I was! And, even now,
While thus I preach the Stoic strain,
Unless I shun Olympia's view,
An hour unsays it all again.
O friend! When Love directs her eyes
To pierce where every passion lies,
Where is the firm, the cautious, or the wise!

TO A PREACHER, ON HIS SERMON AGAINST GLORY

Come then, tell me, sage divine,
Is it an offense to own
That our bosoms e'er incline
Toward immortal Glory's throne? . . .
If to spurn at noble praise
Be the passport to thy heaven,
Follow thou those gloomy ways;
No such law to me was given.

THE BACHELOR'S COMPLAINT

(Akenside Confesses)

Let the busy or the wise
View him with contemptuous eyes;
Love is native to the heart:
Guide its wishes as you will;
Without Love you'll find it still
Void in one essential part.

Though the day have smoothly gone,
Or to lettered leisure known,
Or in social duty spent;
Yet at eve my lonely breast
Seeks in vain for perfect rest:
Languishes for true content.



THOMAS BLACKLOCK

1721-1791

THOMAS BLACKLOCK's father was a Dumfries bricklayer, his mother, daughter of a cattledealer.

At the age of six Blacklock contracted smallpox and recovered with a badly pock-marked face and the loss of his eyesight.

Utterly incapacitated by his blindness, for the following of any mechanical trade, the boy kept at home, imprisoned both in the darkness of his body, and immured in the walls of his father's cottage.

But his mind soon began to dig its way out into the world of ideas and of the imagination. His good Scottish father and his father's friends read tracts and books to the sightless, gentle boy; poetry he grew fondest of hearing; he clung with pitiful enthusiasm to this one way out toward light; Milton, Spenser, Prior, Shenstone, Pope (the latter became his master) poured the day of the great unseen world into the inner eyes of his imagination—that world of the poets, and their visions.

It was a short step, from loving and admiring poets, to imitating them.

When the blind poet was nineteen his father was killed by the falling in of the roof of a malt kiln he was building; the deprivation of his best friend, and the shock of it, brought an additional darkness into the boy's life.

A Dr. Stevenson of Edinburgh, happening to be in Dumfries, heard about Blacklock's genius, poverty, and blindness,

grew interested in his case, and took him under his patronage at Edinburgh.

There he helped him in his studies; the poet quickly became proficient in the learned languages, and a particular scholar in French; Spence, of the "Anecdotes," helped him; Dodsley printed his verse; he studied theology, and was ordained. . . .

Blacklock was given the living of Kircudbright by the Earl of Selkirk, but the independent dwellers in the parish, resenting the patronage of the nobleman, and his giving them a blind preacher for a guide, raised a great row, and he was unable to enter into his incumbency.

The resultant shock to Blacklock brought about a curious incident: the blind poet fell into a waking sleep, in which he joined companions, sang "with two of them in concert, as usual, with taste and elegance, went to supper, and drank a glass or two of wine. His friends, however, observed him to be a little absent and inattentive; by and by he began to speak to himself, but in so slow and confused a manner as to be unintelligible. At last being pretty forcibly roused, he awoke with a sudden start, unconscious of all that had happened, as till then he had continued fast asleep."

After several frustrated courtships of girls who were needlessly cruel, he won a young woman who proved a gentle and affectionate wife.

Removed from Kircudbright to Edinburgh again, he made shift by running a boarding house for young gentlemen whose studies in language and philosophy he supervised.

His benignity and gentle humanity attracted many friends, but he was perforce solitary, and sometimes, God knows, quite bitter, in the absolute darkness in which he lived; he cannot keep an occasional touch of this bitterness from breaking out darkly in his verse.

When he composed it was of course by dictation. And he

could never dictate unless he stood up; in lieu of walking about he fell into a curious vibratory motion of body "which increased as he warmed up to his subject." This motion at last become habitual with him, and though he could sometimes restrain it during a ceremony, or in any public appearance, such as preaching,—he felt a certain uneasiness from the effort, and always returned to it when he could indulge it without impropriety.

Blacklock dwelt fondly and wistfully on colours; but his ideas of them involved distinct moral connotations for each of them . . . much after the manner of the theosophical concept. He distinguished colours by touch.

Like Milton and the latter-day Marston, he describes with more than vivid incisiveness and clarity, objects of material life that he cannot see . . . pathetically writing of—

Whatever objects round me rise
Through the wide fields of light.—

and, sight-hungrily, of the multitudinous motion and liveness of universal visible life, in his "Hymn to the Supreme Being."

Thou fillest the waste of ocean, earth, and air,
With multitudes that swim, or walk, or fly:
From rolling worlds descends thy generous care,
To insect crowds that 'scape the nicest eye.—

And he suffers from intense stabs of visual ache for the colours of flowers—

In yellow glory let the crocus shine. . . .
Here hyacinths in purple sweetness rise . . .
And tulips tinged with beauty's rarest dyes.—

In his age he suffered the additional horror of encroaching deafness.

Blacklock's sayings—

—Laugh at God, yet tremble at a ghost.—
The World 's too much a sinner to repent.—
Ambition's last, best counsellor, a worm.—
A good still in prospect is not good possessed.

AN HYMN TO BENEVOLENCE

Hail! source of transport ever new;
Whilst thy kind dictates I pursue,
 I taste a joy sincere;
Too vast for little minds to know,
Who on themselves alone bestow
 Their wishes and their care. . . .

By thee inspired, the gen'rous breast
In blessing others only blest,
 With goodness large and free,
Delights the widow's tears to stay,
To teach the blind their smoothest way,
 And aid the feeble knee.

O come! and o'er my bosom reign,
Expand my heart, inflame each vein,
 Through ev'ry action shine;
Each low, each selfish wish control,
With all thy essence warm my soul,
 And make me wholly thine. . . .

If from thy sacred paths I turn,
Nor feel their griefs, while others mourn,
 Nor with their pleasures glow:
Banished from God, from bliss, and thee,
My own tormenter let me be,
 And groan in hopeless woe.

A SOLILOQUY

(Occasioned by the author's escape from falling into a deep well, where he must have been irrecoverably lost, if his favourite lap-dog, Phylax, had not, *by the sound of his feet upon the board by which the well was covered*, warned him of danger.):

Erect with horror stands my bristling hair;
My tongue forgets its motion; strength forsakes
My trembling limbs; my voice, impelled in vain,
No passage finds; cold, cold as death my blood,
Keen as the breath of winter, chills each vein.
For on the verge, the awful verge of fate
Scarce fixed I stand; and one progressive step
Had plunged me down, unfathomably deep,
To gulfs impervious to the cheerful sun. . . .
Come then, my little guardian genius, clothed
In that familiar form, my Phylax, come!
Let me caress thee, hug thee to my heart,
Which beats with joy of life preserved by thee. . . .

Me miserable! wherefore, O my soul!
Was, on such hard conditions, life desired?
One step, one friendly step, without thy guilt,
Had placed me safe in thy profound recess,
Where, undisturbed, eternal quiet reigns,
And sweet forgetfulness of grief and care.
Why then, my coward soul, didst thou recoil?
Why shun the final exit of thy woe?
Why shiver at approaching dissolution?
Say why, by nature's unresisted force,
Is every being, where volition reigns
And active choice, impelled to shun their fate,
And dread destruction as the worst of ills;
Say why they shrink, why fly, why fight, why risk

Precarious life, to lengthen out its date,
Which, lengthened, is at best, protracted pain?

TO A GENTLEMAN, WHO ASKED MY SENTIMENT OF HIM

Dear Fabius, me if well you know,
You ne'er will take me for a foe;
If right yourself you comprehend,
You ne'er will take me for a friend.

THE AUTHOR'S PICTURE

—Self is the grand pursuit of half mankind:
How vast a crowd by self, like me, are blind! . . .
When age and wrinkles seize the conq'ring maid,
Self, not the glass, reflects the flatt'ring shade.
Then, wonder-working self, begin the lay;
Thy charms to others, as to me display.
Straight is my person, but of little size;
Lean are my cheeks, and hollow are my eyes;
My youthful down is, like my talents, rare;
Politely distant stands each single hair.
My voice too rough to charm a lady's ear;
So smooth a child may listen without fear;
Not formed in cadence soft and warbling lays,
To soothe the fair through pleasure's wanton ways.
My form so fine, so regular, so new,
My port so manly and so fresh my hue;
Oft as I meet the crowd, they laughing say,
"See, see Memento Mori cross the way." . . .
Yet though my person fearless may be seen,
There is some danger in my graceful mien:
For, as some vessel tossed by wind and tide,
Bounds o'er the waves, and rocks from side to side;
In just vibration thus I always move:

This who can view and not be forced to love? . . .
Like all mankind, with vanity I'm blessed,
Conscious of wit I never yet possessed.
To strong desires my heart is easy prey,
Oft feels their force, but never owns their sway.
This hour, perhaps, as death I hate my foe;
The next I wonder why I should do so. . . .
I ne'er for satire torture common sense;
Nor show my wit at God's or man's expense.
Harmless I live, unknowing and unknown;
Wish well to all, and yet do good to none. . . .

YOU ASK BY WHAT MEANS

You ask by what means I my livelihood gain,
And how my long conflict with fortune maintain?
The question is kind, yet I cannot tell why,
'T is hard for a spirit like mine to reply. . . .
'T is vain to repine, the philosophers say,
So I take what is offered, and live as I may;
To my wants, still returning, adapt my supplies,
And find in my hope what my fortune denies. . . .
But who could determine, in fondness of brain,
By priesthood or poetry, life to maintain?
Our Maker to serve, or our souls to improve,
Are tasks self-rewarded, and labours of love.
Such with hunger and thirst are deservedly paid,
'T is glorious to starve by so noble a trade.



CHRISTOPHER SMART

1722-1771

CHRISTOPHER SMART was, like Keats, a child of premature birth.

Feeble of body, he turned all his attention and energy toward classical studies. He began writing poetry at the age of four, and, at the age of sixteen, was an accomplished Latinist.

Because of his constitutional delicacy in childhood, after the medical custom of the age, cordials were prescribed for his use; and this fastened on him the habit of drink.

At Cambridge, where he was the college's pride and chief poetic ornament, Smart wrote Latin poems for the "Tripos," turned various poems of Pope into Latin—for which he received the praise of the great poet, and contributed fables in rhyme to "The Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany."

There was a wealthy man named Seaton who left a money prize for Cambridge students,—for, as he naïvely phrased it "the best poem on one of the attributes of the Supreme Being, TILL THE SUBJECT IS EXHAUSTED."

Smart won this prize five times, writing on the Eternity — Immensity — Omniscience — Power — and Goodness of God. . . .

Smart's vivacity of manners and the sprightliness of his discourse confirmed his alcoholic propensities. He ruined himself by returning the tavern treats of strangers who had invited him, as a wit and unusual personage, in order

to boast of his acquaintance . . . his debts to vintners and cooks caused his scholarship to be sequestered, and he had to leave Cambridge. . . .

In London he joined the forces of Grub Street and began writing for his bread . . . adding to the precariousness of his livelihood by marrying. . . .

He often absentmindedly invited company to dinner when there wasn't enough food in the house for the family. . . .

Smart numbered among his friends many of the great and successful: Dr. Johnson, Dr. Hawkesworth, Garrick, Goldsmith, and others . . . but his drinking, his neglect of person, and especially his habit of dashing off his verse and sending it to be printed, at the first draught, without once going over it, told against his getting on. . . .

Calling himself "The Poet of God," he early took on that fanatic cast of mind, that, later on, was to insure him a sojourn in the mad-house. His religious frenzies now intensified themselves. He antedated the Salvation Army by kneeling in the streets and gutters, and asking friends and strangers to pray with him. . . .

Several years of severe application saw his translation of Horace well on the way; his only exercise, walking from his rooms to the ale-house and back . . . now he broke out into severe paroxysms of insanity and was confined. . . .

In the meantime his wife and two children suffered extremely till friends removed them to a cottage provided for them in the country. . . .

Two mad-house years . . . during which, when cruelly denied pen, ink, and paper, the poet scrabbled with a key on the plaster of the wainscot his "Hymn to David," now included in the standard anthologies. In this, his masterpiece, his mind broke loose from the fashionable poetic rigidity of the age. The verses were so extraordinary, so incomprehensible to those who boasted of "correct taste," that,

after his death, only a few stanzas were reluctantly included in his collected works by the editor.

After Smart got free of restraint, Garrick tendered him a benefit, and he was given a pension of fifty pounds a year from the Royal Treasury, which, added to the forty pounds a year previously granted him by the Duchess of Cleveland, should have kept him above want, especially as his wife and children were being maintained apart from him, by friends . . . but Smart proved more improvident than ever—giving to others what he needed for himself . . . he suffered imprisonment for debt. . . .

He died of a disease of the liver, brought on by excessive brandy-drinking. . . .

Smart wrote many of his poems kneeling . . . he would be brought out of bed at one ecstatic leap, by the impelling force of their inspiration,—in the midst of the cold, dark, disagreeable night. . . .

There was a great joke about town, connected with the misprinting of two of Smart's lines of verse, in which it was announced that at dawn

"Strong Labour got up with his pipe in his mouth," as if the poet had meant to imply that the workman had spent the night that way. It hinged on a printer's error: it should have read:

"Strong Labour got up—with his pipe in his mouth
He stoutly strode over the dale," etc.

Smart stood in awe and fear of the nobility: once, about to introduce his wife to a man of rank, he suddenly turned and ran from the house in confusion, leaving his wife, humiliated, to follow. . . .

Browning, in his "Parleyings," devotes a poem to Smart, likening his mind to a huge house bare of furnishings, except one great room inexplicably and richly adorned. . . .

Samuel Johnson, in creditable and honourable indignation, said:

“He insisted on people praying with him, and I’d as lief pray with Smart as anyone else. Another charge was, he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it.”

If the “Hymn to David” affords any criterion, it is too bad Christopher Smart did not write all his verse when insane: Only occasionally, in the rest of his poems, does the great flame come shouldering through:

(Man’s) wisdom on the leaden feet
Of slow experience, dully tedious, creeps,
And comes like vengeance, after long delay.—

Iris dancing on the new-fallen dew.—

Like heavy Saturn in ethereal space
Begirt with an inexplicable ring.—

And these strange lines, full of a Hindoo vastness—
With golden ingots all thy camels load
To adorn his temples.—

Bow down, ye elephants, submissive bow
To Him Who made the mite.—

Perhaps the following lines, descriptive of the nightingale’s migration, lent more than a valid hint to Bryant’s “Ode to a Waterfowl.”

Philomela,
Who points her passage through the pathless void
To realms from us remote, to us unknown.—

Another and last passage of beauty—from this “Poet of God,”—

Natheless conspicuous in the linnet’s throat
Is His unbounded goodness.—

TO IDLENESS

For thee, O Idleness, the woes
Of life we patiently endure;
Thou art the source whence labour flows;
We shun thee but to make thee sure.

For who 'd sustain war's toil and waste,
Or who th' harsh thundering of the sea,—
But to be idle at the last,
And find a pleasing end in thee.

TO A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WIDOW, WEEPING

What on earth is so enchanting
As beauty weeping on her weeds!
Through flowing eyes, on bosom panting,
What a rapturous joy proceeds!

Since from death there's no returning,—
When the old lover bids adieu
All the pomp and farce of mourning
Are but signals for a new.

Nature a disguise may borrow,
Yet this maxim true will prove:
Spite of pride and spite of sorrow
She that has a heart must love.

A NIGHT-PIECE

Night with her negro train
Took possession of the plain. . . .
Close beside her with printless feet
Crept stillness in a winding sheet;
Next to her deaf silence was seen
Treading on tiptoes over the green—
Beneath a myrtle's melancholy shade,

Sophron the wise was laid:
"While others toil within the town,
Fond of trifles, fond of toys,
And married to that woman, noise,—
Sacred wisdom be my care,
And fairest virtue, wisdom's heir." . . .
His speculations thus the sage began,
When, lo! the neighbouring bell
In solemn sound struck one—
He starts, he recollects, he was engaged to Nell;
Then up he sprung, nimble and light,
And rapped at fair Eleanor's door;
He laid aside virtue that night,
And next morn poured in Plato for more.

PATRIOTS OF MANKIND

Are we not all of race divine,
Alike of an immortal line?
Shall man to man afford derision
But for some casual division?
To malice and to mischief prone,
From climate, canton, and from zone,
Parties and distinction make
For parties' and distinction's sake? . . .
Souls sprung from an ethereal flame,
However clad, are still the same;
Nor should we judge the heart or head
By air we breathe, or earth we tread. . . .
Give prejudices to the wind,
And let 's be patriots of mankind.

THE SAVIOUR

His was a life of miracles and might
And charity and love . . . him, blessed Shepherd,

His flocks shall follow through the maze of life,
And shades that tend to dayspring from on high;
And as the radiant roses, never fading,
In fuller foliage and more fragrant breath
Revive in smiling Spring, so shall it fare
With those that love him . . . for sweet is their favour,
And all eternity shall be their Spring.



JOSEPH WARTON

1722-1800

JOSEPH WARTON, with his brother Thomas, was a pioneer and prime mover of the beginnings of the romantic school which was to break the classic tradition of Pope and others, and make way for Byron, Scott, Shelley, and Keats. But his poetry was inconsiderable and bad.

He caught the smallpox and went with a badly marred face ever after.

Loyal to his brother in their mutual career of scholarship, he wrote him, "Do not doubt of being able to get some money this winter. If I ever have a groat, you may depend on two pence."

He was an intimate friend of poor Collins, who went mad, not through poverty, but through having inherited a fortune of two thousand pounds, and whose crazy pastime was to howl with the roaring of great organs, when they were sonorous in cathedrals and churches. . . .

"Collins and he met in Surrey at the Guilford Races together, and projected a joint volume of odes, but the project never came off." The sketch Warton drew up of an intended Ode to the Passions suggested Collins' ode of the same title.

Warton, entering the Church, was presented with the rectory of Wynslade by the Duke of Bolton. This enabled Warton safely to marry a lady named Daman. His domestic fecility was now complete. But when his patron the Duke took up with a mistress (whose name Polly Peachum,

sounds like a character from Gay's *Beggars' Opera*)—to whom he wished immediately to be married on the death of his Duchess (the latter already close to the grave)—he sent for Warton to join him where he was travelling in the south of France. "He commanded Warton to come and be with him, in order to have a clergyman near by, to perform an immediate marriage ceremony the moment news came of the death of the duchess."

Reluctantly Warton obeyed the man to whom he was obliged. "He could not refuse without destroying his future expectations, and the straitened income of his small living made an abandonment of his hopes of preferment hardly to be expected."

But Warton "becoming tired of the situation, returned home in September, and when the Duchess died, the succeeding month, the Duke had to send for Mr. Devisme, Chaplain to the Embassy at Turin." . . .

Warton became headmaster of Winchester School. He taught for thirty-eight years. But he was not a disciplinarian. Twice the boys under him "mutinied and inflicted on him ludicrous humiliations." "After ingloriously suppressing the third insurrection, he prudently resigned his post."

He became a member of the famous Literary Club. He edited Dryden, and Pope, and translated the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* of Virgil.

"His great failing was to want force of character."

These gentle, half-animate scholars were too innately weak and sweet-minded to write greatly, though on the right track. . . . O, for a good, blasphemous poet from the Mermaid, come alive again! . . .

To the Devil with these academic odes with their gentle inoffensiveness, their stale personifications! Trembling Doubt; Murder with his reeking sword; black Revenge;

Blithe Plenty with her loaded horn; gloomy Care . . . with their "meek-eyed maidens clad in sober gray"; their shrieking ghosts; grey ruins; their stale classic school-text references to Leonidas, Brutus, Achilles, Hercules, Ariadne, Bacchus; their new-made graves; laden breasts; frantic suicides; poisoned daggers; their every noun mated to its sickly, dragging adjective, cast in to complete the meter; their Spring arrayed in primrose-coloured robe; vital heat; joyous groves; glaring tigers; soft desires; dusky nooks; grim wolves. . . .

An instance of the process by which the romantics spoiled any natural stroke of observation—

Warton has just written—

—when shine the hills,

Twinkle the streams, and woods look tipped with gold.—then he needs must have "yonder appear"—meaninglessly one upon the other—

"sharp-eyed Philosophy . . . Virgin Solitude . . .

Sweet Innocence . . . Wisdom's hoary head," etc., etc.

"He looked upon invention and imagination to be the chief faculties of a poet," and he chiefly indulged this "invention" and "imagination" by having walk on and off the poetic stage, these weakly personified abstractions.

Warton writes of "the frigid lays of cold and creeping art," rather Pope's precise clipped hedges and smooth-shaven lawns, than this lax lukewarm sickishness!

Let me choose—writes Warton—(rather than Versailles) that boasts a thousand fountains. . . .

Some pine-topped precipice

Abrupt and shaggy, where a foamy stream

Tumbling roars; or some black heath,

Where straggling stands the mournful juniper,

Or yew tree scattered; while, in clear prospect round,

From the grove's bosom spires emerge, and smoke
In bluish wreaths ascends, ripe harvests wave,
Low, lonely cottages, and ruined tops
Of Gothic battlements appear, and streams
Beneath the sunbeam twinkle.—

Joseph Warton's sayings:—

Shakespeare's warbling wild.—

We deem all manners odious but our own.

TO FANCY

O, Parent of each lovely Muse!
Thy spirit o'er my soul diffuse,
O'er all my artless songs preside,
My footsteps to thy temple guide,
To offer at thy turf-built shrine
In golden cups no costly wine;
No murdered fatlings from the flock,
But flowers, and honey from the rock. . . .
O, lover of the desert, hail!
Say, in what deep and pathless vale,
Or on what hoary mountain's side,
'Midst falls of water you reside;
'Midst broken rocks, a rugged scene,
With green and grassy dales between. . . .
Where Nature seems to sit alone. . . .
O, Queen of Numbers, once again
Animate some chosen swain. . . .
O, deign to attend his evening walk,
With him in groves and grottoes talk;
Teach him to scorn the frigid art
Feebly to touch the enraptured heart;
Like lightning let his mighty verse

The bosom's inmost feelings pierce;
With native beauties bring applause
Beyond cold critics' studied laws.

YON SHEPHERD

Yon shepherd idly stretched on the rude rock,
Listening to the dashing waves, and sea mews' clang
High hovering o'er his head, who views beneath
The dolphin dancing on the level brine,
Feels more true bliss than the proud admiral,
Amid his vessels fraught with burnished gold
And silken streamers, though his lordly nod
Ten thousand war-worn mariners revere.

FASHION

Yes, yes, my friend, disguise it as you will,
To right or wrong 't is Fashion guides us still. . . .
The peer, prince, peasant, soldier, squire, divine,
Goddess of Change, bend low before your shrine,
Swearing to follow, wheresoe'er you lead
Though you eat toads, or walk upon your head. . . .
Hence girls, once modest, without blush appear,
With legs displayed, and swan-soft bosoms bare.



THOMAS WARTON

1728-1790

A TYPICAL scholastic, a born celibate collegian, whose existence was happy within the limits of a college "where the transitions from the study to the common-room, and from thence back to the study, marked the passing day with scarce any variation."

Warton's father was a poet and professor of poetry at Oxford before him; his brother Joseph was a poet; his son was a poet. . . .

Thomas Warton was among the first to lay emphasis on the importance of the Gothic and Romantic elements in literature, in contradistinction to the classic influence, which was rapidly case-hardening English poetry. He was fond of the *Gesta Romanorum*, and broke a lance for Langland, Chaucer, and Spenser, in his three-volume history of English Poetry . . . which suffered from the defect of being built upon a vast body of hastily scribbled, loose, disjointed notes; and in such an inaccurate fashion that one fourth of the second volume is taken up with corrections of errata found in the first.

This huge man, of an inverted, rubicund, moonish countenance, who, when excited gobbled like a turkey,—was a jolly, brilliant talker and companion. He drank many foaming mugs of ale while indulging in comfortable poetic fantasies with congenial friends, about the oaken tables of old English inns.

But let a band go by, striking up with a military parade,

and Warton would be out, following fife and drum, along with the small boys! . . .

And hangings fascinated him; which he seldom missed attending. . . .

He suffered much from gout because of his addiction to port and ale.

He was a sloven in his dress.

He was poet laureate after Whitehead.

He was taken off by a stroke of palsy, his friends finding him in his chair, seeming to sit dozing, one side stricken lifeless . . . next day he died a-bed.

Warton edited Spenser and the minor poems of Milton. It was to the minor poems of Milton that he owed much of the inspiration for his verse. He was an inconsiderable poet, but surpassed many a greater by his first-hand observation of nature.

THE FIRST OF APRIL

Reluctant comes the timid Spring,
Scarce a bee, with airy ring,
Murmurs the blossomed boughs around,
That clothe the garden's southern bound:
Scarce a sickly, straggling flower
Decks the rough castle's rifted tower:
Scarce the hardy primrose peeps
From the dark dell's entangled steeps:
O'er the field of waving broom,
Slowly shoots the golden bloom. . . .
In loose luxuriance taught to stray
A thousand tumbling rills inlay
With silver veins the vales, or pass
Redundant through the sparkling grass. . . .
The swallow, for the moment seen,
Skims in haste the village green;
From the gray moor, on feeble wing,

The screaming plovers idly spring:
The butterfly, gay-painted, soon
Explores awhile the tepid noon;
And fondly trusts its tender dyes
To fickle suns, and flattering skies.

TO THE RIVER LODON

Ah, what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Beneath thy azure sky and golden sun:
Where first my muse to lisp her notes begun!
While pensive memory traces back the round,
Which fills the varied interval between;
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.
Sweet native stream! those skies and suns so pure
No more return, to cheer my evening road!
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure,
Not useless, all my vacant days have flowed,
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature
Nor with the muse's laurel unbestowed.



JOHN SCOTT

1730-1783

"THE POET of Amwell."

John Scott's father was a Quaker linendraper, who maimed the spirit of his boy by keeping him in abiding fear of contracting smallpox. In order to avoid contagion he took him out of school and kept him at home, where his education was continued in a haphazard manner. The smallpox breaking out in the adjacent town of Ware, he was dragged off to St. Margaret's, a hamlet two miles from Amwell.

Though London was but a score of miles distant, for twenty years he was prevented from visiting that city, because of the same fear.

But later, when he submitted to inoculation, he felt brave enough to go there, and meet all the literati, to whose friendship he had long aspired. . . .

At the age of seventeen Scott became a great solitary student, especially of poetry; which he was introduced to by his intimate friend, Frogley, with a copy of Milton. Frogley was "an eccentric, studious bricklayer."

Scott married twice, and had bad luck with both his wives. The first—the sister of his bricklayer-mentor—died in child-bed. He sent the elegy he wrote upon her to Langhorne, whose wife had died in the same fashion. "This similarity of circumstance and congenial affliction gave rise to a friendship between the two poets, which was only interrupted by the demise of Langhorne."

Scott marrying again, his second wife died of a putrid fever, which the poet caught of her, following her demise within two weeks.

"After his vaccination the Quaker poet extended his interests. He took an active part in politics. He wrote a book on better roads. He became a good friend of Dr. Johnson."

John Scott's poetry, despite accurate observation of nature, is mostly dull and prating. His Moral Eclogues are tenth rate imitations of Virgil and Theocritus,—where the seldom good line is lost in a morass of dullness.

There is one poem of his that is quotable:

I HATE THE DRUM'S DISCORDANT SOUND

I hate the drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round;
To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields,
And lures from cities and from fields,
To sell their liberty for charms
Of tawdry lace and glittering arms;
And when Ambition's voice commands,—
To march, and fight, and fall, in foreign lands.

I hate the drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round:
To me it talks of ravaged plains,
And burning towns, and ruined swains,
And mangled limbs, and dying groans,
And widows' tears, and orphans' moans;
And all that Misery's hand bestows,
To fill the catalogue of human woes.



ERASMUS DARWIN

1731-1802

THIS "son of a private gentleman" was the progenitor of an illustrious scientific family. His grandson was Charles Darwin, author of the "Origin of the Species" and "The Descent of Man," and promulgator of the theory of Evolution; and his great-grandson, the eminent mathematician of the present day.

When a young man, Erasmus Darwin came to Lichfield and practised medicine. "He was somewhat above the middle size, his form athletic, and inclined to corpulence; his limbs too heavy for exact proportion. The traces of a severe smallpox: features and countenance, which, when they were not animated by social pleasure, were rather saturnine than sprightly; a stoop in the shoulder, and the then professional appendage, a large, full-bottomed wig, gave, at an early period of life, an appearance of nearly twice the years he bore. Florid health, and an earnest of good humour, a sunny smile, on entering the room, and on first accosting his friends, rendered, in his youth, that exterior agreeable, to which beauty and symmetry had not been propitious."

He stammered extremely; yet, taking advantage of the defect, used his verbal hesitancy for many a sly thrust of irony and humour. The great Johnson himself, chary of conflict with him, avoided his presence, when on a visit to Lichfield.

"He disregarded the accounts his patients gave of them-

selves, and rather chose to collect his information by indirect inquiry. He had an apparent want of confidence in mankind, and extreme was his scepticism to human truth.

"On the other hand he was a humane man, and, without labouring under any illusions as regarded people, in the midst of an extensive and wealthy practice, he treated the poor without payment besides feeding them at his table. . . .

"He had a horror of spirits, however diluted."

In his "Botanic Garden" he thus excoriatingly describes *Vitis*, or The Vine, in strains far other than those of Omar Khayyam:—

Drink deep, sweet youth, seductive *VITIS* cries,
The maudlin tear-drop glittering in her eyes;
Green leaves and purple clusters crown her head,
And the tall thrysus stays her tottering tread.
Five hapless swains with soft, assuasive smiles
The harlot meshes in her deathful toils;
"Drink deep," she carols, as she waves in air
The mantling goblet, "and forget your care"—
O'er the dread feast malignant *Chemia* scowls,
And mingles poison in the nectared bowls;
Fell Gout peeps grinning through the flimsy scene,
And bloated Dropsy pants behind unseen;
Wrapped in his robe white *Lepra* hides his stains,
And silent Phrensy writhing bites his chains.—

And, in a copious footnote at the bottom of the page—one of his numerous expository footnotes—Darwin proceeds—"The juice of the ripe grape is a nutritious and agreeable food . . . the chemical process of fermentation . . . converts food into poison. And it has thus become the curse of the whole Christian world."

But, for all that, the good Doctor himself once fell a victim to the fermented juice of the grape, on one occasion,

when "he joined several friends on an expedition by water, from Burton to Nottingham, and on to Newark . . . the noonday meal had been made, and the glass gone daily round . . . it was one of those few instances, when the Doctor imbibed."

On the boat's approaching Nottingham "he surprised his companions by stepping, without any previous notice, from the boat into the middle of the river, and swimming ashore," where he gained the marketplace, stationed himself on top of a tub, and harangued the people, on the value of fresh air, and of sleeping with open windows.

"Having delivered his impassioned oration, he quietly stepped down from the tub, rejoined his friends, and resumed the expedition."

Darwin was an indefatigable investigator of natural phenomena, and a seeker after new mechanical contrivances—"his propensity to mechanics led him to construct a very singular carriage, a platform with a seat fixed upon a very high pair of wheels, and supported in front so that the horse could move from one side of the road to the other, quartering, as it is called, at the will of the driver." . . .

Day, the author of "Sanford and Merton" and "The Dying Negro," and one of the Darwin-Seward literary coterie at Lichfield, was fatally kicked by a colt to whose "sensitive and reasonable nature" he trusted himself. . . .

Darwin, being a practicalist and involved in nothing but a mechanical experiment, got off with a severe fall, and "ever afterward walked with a slight lameness due to an injury to the patella of the right knee."

The long platonic relationship between the author of "The Botanic Garden" and Anna Seward, "The Swan of Lichfield," was, on his part, one of sincere and affectionate friendship, on hers, an adroit and femininely concealed love that was leavened with deep admiration for the learned

man's great talent. Her hidden love received its greatest test when the poet used a poem of hers, without acknowledgment, as prefatory verse to his "Botanic Garden." . . .

The Doctor owned a male Persian cat, which he called Snow; . . . "The Swan of Lichfield" owned a female Persian: it amused these two eminent literary lights to conduct a pretended foolish correspondence of courtship between these cats. The cat of the poetess was famous for having "been broken of her propensity to kill birds: she lived several years without molesting a dove, a tame lark, and a redbreast, all of which used to fly about the room where the cat was daily admitted. The dove sat on pussy's back, and the little birds would pick fearlessly from a plate in which she was eating." . . .

Darwin was a substantial family man of regular and impeccable morality. He married twice, his first wife dying. He had many children.

When one of his sons—a middle-aged man engaged in business—committed suicide by drowning, the Doctor's one comment was, on receiving the information, an exclamation in a low voice, "Poor, insane coward!" and it is said he never afterward mentioned the subject.

In his last few years Erasmus Darwin was subject to "sudden and alarming disorders of the chest . . . he had frequently risen in the night and bled himself . . . he suspected angina pectoris." . . .

"He rang the bell and ordered his servant to send Mrs. Darwin up to him . . . 'My dear, you must bleed me instantly.' 'Alas, I dare, not, lest—'; turning to his daughter—who had also come in—'Emma, will you? there is no time to be lost.' 'Yes, my dear father, if you will direct me.' At that moment he sunk into his chair, and expired. . . .

"It was the general opinion that a glass of brandy might have saved him."

"A strange habit was imputed to Dr. Darwin, which presents such an exterior of idiot-seeming indelicacy that the author of this tract (Anna Seward) is tempted to express her entire disbelief of its truth, viz.: that his tongue was generally hanging out of his mouth as he walked along. She has often, of late years, met him in the streets of Lichfield, alone and musing, and never witnessed a custom so indecent. From the early loss of his teeth he looked much older than he was. That loss exposes the tongue to view when speaking, and Dr. Darwin's mouth certainly thus disclosed the ravages of time, but by no means in any offensive degree."

To compliment Benjamin Franklin "on his having united Philosophy to modern Science" Darwin wrote a letter to "the discoverer of lightning" addressing it, "Dr. Franklin, America," saying he felt inclined to make it a still more flattering superscription, "Dr. Franklin, the World." The letter was received and answered.

"The Botanic Garden," Darwin's chief work, fills a huge folio volume.

This magnum opus took ten years in the writing—its composition chiefly carried through while its author was travelling about in his chaise from one patient to another.

"Botany was at the time a fashionable study, and the 'Botanic Garden' sold at an immense price."

The poem is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the general upward growth of creation into forms of more complicated life "including the economy of vegetation."

The second and most celebrated part contains an elab-

orate and explicit account of the "loves of plants": wherein Darwin has an amusingly uncomfortable task getting around the fact of the polyandrous loves of the females, in the Linnean system . . . trying to square the exuberant sexual life of flowers with the human code of monogamy. . . . Darwin dubs the males of the plants, husbands, lovers, associates, rival swains,—even brothers!

Each section of the "Botanic Garden" is, furthermore, "enriched by a number of philosophic notes," which elucidate the text "with a great variety of theories and experiments in botany, chemistry, electricity, mechanics" and there are a multitude of footnotes "on the various species of the air, salubrious, noxious, and deadly. The discoveries of modern professors in all those sciences, are frequently mentioned"—in these notes explanations are found "of every personified plant, its generic history, its local situation, and the nature of the soil and climate to which it is indigenous, its botanic and common name." . . .

"All the operations of electricity pass in review: a lovely female receiving the shock on a waxen elevation. Also a circle of young men and women electrified. Their resulting sensations are described with perfect truth and elegance, and the effects of this discovery in paralytic cases are thus exquisitely described—

'Palsy's cold hands the fierce concussion own,

And Life clings trembling on her tottering throne.'

"Also the disastrous fate of Professor Richman at Peterburgh, pursuing the Electric Experiment with fatal temerity."

Thus, from diving bells to balloons, all things and phenomena fit into the universal sweep of the Doctor's Song; who unostentatiously and without boasting of it, in his pedestrian way, sings modern life long before Walt Whitman.

"The Botanic Garden"

The Botanic Queen appears and holds a review of all the sylphs, gnomes, and fire-spirits who keep the processes of creation in unceasing growth and repair. The entire poem is awkwardly carried on the backs of a series of hortatory verbs.—

A critic has rightly pronounced that it should have been the Goddess of Nature, not the Goddess of Botany, invoked, and that the creative and renewing powers under her bidding should have been beings of mightier texture than the "machinery" of Rosicrucian philosophy; fitting enough for a slight, satiric piece like "The Rape of the Lock." Hartley Coleridge employed the same graceful inconsequential mythology in his fragmentary "Prometheus."

The entire story of animate and inanimate life comes from the mouth of the Botanic Queen, as she addresses these adjuvant spirits of hers—

A synoptic fragment, taken at random—

"The sylphs are now applauded by their Queen (The Botanic Queen) for having instructed Torricelli and Boyle, concerning the properties of the air, its pressure and elasticity. Young Rossiere's dire fate, precipitated from his flaming montgolfier (balloon), comes forward here . . . illustrated by the fable of Icarus . . . the Mermaids decorating his watery tomb . . . fresh commendation is given the sylphs for their inspirations in the mind of Dr. Priestley. . . . Air calcining the phlogistic ore is termed the marriage of Ether with the Mine . . . illustrated by the retold story of Pluto and Proserpina. . . .

"The venerable and celebrated Mrs. Delany, sometime deceased, and her miraculous Hortus Siccus, are here introduced. . . . Mrs. Delany, in her representation of plants and flowers, native and exotic, and which fill ten folio vol-

umes, used neither wax, moss, nor wire . . . she employed no material but paper, which she herself, from her knowledge of chemistry, was enabled to dye of all hues, and in every shade of each; no implement but her scissors, not once her pencil; yet never did painting present a more exact representation of flowers of every colour, size, and cultivation, from simple hedge and field-flower, to the most complicated foliage that Horticulture has multiplied . . . this lady . . . began . . . her astonishing, self-invented work at the age of seventy-four," so on and on . . . the cotton spinning machine . . . the invention of the diving bell . . . the first balloon . . . the steam engine . . . gunpowder—in addressing the gnomes the Botanic Muse tells them—

You taught mysterious BACON to explore
Metallic veins, and part the dross from ore. . . .
Through wiry nets the black diffusion strain,
And close an airy ocean in a grain.—

Nothing is deemed alien to poetry by Dr. Darwin's Muse—

THE STEAM ENGINE

(With a careful footnote that Savery, not Watts, was the true discoverer of steam; Watts being the improver of the discovery.)

Nymphs! You erewhile on simmering cauldrons played,
And called delighted SAVERY to your aid;
Bade round the youth explosive STEAM aspire
In gathering clouds, and winged the wave with fire;
Bade with cold streams the quick expansive stop,
And sunk the immense of vapour to a drop—
Pressed by the ponderous air the Piston falls
Resistless, sliding through its iron walls;
Quick moves the balanced beam, of giant-birth,
Wields his large limbs, and nodding shakes the earth. . . .

(Then the Botanic Goddess herself hymns STEAM prophetically)

Soon shall thy arm, unconquered STEAM! afar
Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car;
Or on wide-waving wings expanded bear
The flying chariot through the fields of air.
Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,
Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move;
Or warrior-bands alarm the gaping crowd,
And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud.

It is noteworthy that Erasmus Darwin not only preceded Walt Whitman in singing the poetry of the life of the day—however inadequately—but that he also foreran his famous grandson in previously formulating his doctrines of evolution; in associating musical notation with the poetic meters, before Lanier; and in forecasting the modern “Colour-organ”; for he suggested, in his prose dialogues on poetry, such an instrument, from observing “the curious coincidence in the mathematical relationship between the seven primary colours and the seven notes of the gamut.” . . .

“An organ might be made” by which ‘colour-music’ could be given “by means of Mr. Organd’s lamps,—a strong light passing through coloured glasses, and falling on a defined part of a wall, with movable blinds before them, which might communicate with the keys of a harpsichord, thus producing at the same time visible and invisible music.”

THE CREATION (OR SCIENCE AND GENESIS COMBINED)

LET THERE BE LIGHT! proclaimed the ALMIGHTY LORD,
Astonished Chaos heard the potent word;—
Through all his realms the kindling ether runs,

And the mass starts into a million suns;
Earths round each sun with quick explosions burst,
And second planets issue from the first;
Bend, as they journey with projectile force,
In bright ellipses their reluctant course;
Orbs wheel in orbs, round centres centres roll,
And form, self-balanced, one revolving Whole,
Onward they move amid their bright abode,
Space without bound, THE BOSOM OF THEIR GOD!

THE GUN IS FIRED

Pent in dark chambers of cylindric brass,
Slumbers in grim repose the sooty mass;
Lit by the brilliant spark, from grain to grain,
Runs the quick fire along the kindling train;
On the pained ear-drum bursts the sudden crash,
Starts the red flame, and death pursues the flash.

THE ADVENT OF THE BOTANIC GODDESS

She comes!—The GODDESS!—through the whispering air,
Bright as the morn, descends her blushing car;
Each circling wheel a wreath of flowers intertwines,
And gemmed with flowers the silken harness shines;
The golden bits with flowery studs are decked,
And knots of flowers the crimson reins connect.—
And now on earth the silver axle rings,
And the shell sinks upon its slender springs;
Light from her airy seat the Goddess bounds,
And steps celestial press the pansied grounds.

THE TRAIN OF THE GODDESS

Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, Salamanders—are mustered—
Pleased GNOMES, ascending from their earthy beds,
Play round her graceful footsteps, as she treads;

Gay SYLPHS attendant beat the fragrant air
On winnowing wings, and waft her golden hair;
Blue NYMPHS emerging leave their sparkling streams,
And FIERY FORMS alight from orient beams;
Musked in the rose's lap fresh dew's they shed,
Or breathe celestial lustres round her head. . . .
So the clear Lens collects with magic power
The countless glories of the midnight hour;
Stars after stars with quivering lustre fall,
And twinkling glide along the whitened wall.—
Pleased, as they pass, she counts the glittering bands,
And stills their murmur with her waving hands;
Each listening tribe with fond expectance burns,
And now to these, and now to those, she turns. . . .

The Botanic Goddess recounts to each class of spirits
what their tasks are, and have been, in the former and
present-continuous creation of the world—

From which recital I give the following extracts—

THE BIRTH OF THE GODDESS DIONE, FROM THE SEA

Bright rose the Goddess like the star of morn,
When with soft fires the milky dawn he leads,
And wakes to life and love the laughing meads;—
With rosy fingers, as uncurled they hung
Round her fair brow, her golden locks she wrung;
O'er the smooth surge on silver sandals stood,
And looked enchantment on the dazzled flood.—
The bright drops, rolling from her lifted arms,
In slow meanders wander o'er her charms,
Seek round her snowy neck their lucid track,
Pearl her white shoulders, gem her ivory back,
Round her fine waist and swelling bosom swim,

And star with glittering brine her crystal limb.—
—The immortal form enamoured Nature hailed,
And Beauty blazed to heaven and earth unveiled.

THE SONG OF THE UNQUARRIED MARBLE

Hence wearied Hercules in marble rears
His languid limbs, and rests a thousand years;
Still, as he leans, shall young ANTINOÛS please
With careless grace and unaffected ease;
Onward with loftier step Apollo spring,
And launch the unerring arrow from the string;
In Beauty's bashful form, the veil unfurled,
Ideal Venus win the gazing world.

THE UNDERGROUND CITY

(There is a town in the immense salt mines of Cracow in Poland, with a marketplace, a river, a church, and a famous statue—here supposed to be Lot's wife—by the moist or dry appearance of which the subterranean inhabitants are said to know when the weather is fair above ground.)

—Caverned round in CRACOW's mighty mines,
With crystal walls a gorgeous city shines;
Scooped in the briny rock long streets extend
Their hoary course, and glittering domes ascend;
Down the bright steeps, emerging into day,
Impetuous fountains burst their headlong way,
O'er milk-white vales in ivory channels spread,
And wondering seek their subterranean bed.
Far gleaming o'er the town transparent fanes
Rear their white towers, and wave their golden vanes;
Long lines of lustres pour their trembling rays,
And the bright vault returns the mingled blaze.

THE SOURCE OF STEEL

—Dusky iron sleeps in dark abodes,
And ferny foliage nestles in the nodes;
Till with wide lungs the panting bellows blow,
And waked by fire the glittering torrents flow;
Quick whirls the wheel, the ponderous hammer falls,
Loud anvils ring amid the trembling walls,
Strokes follow strokes, the sparkling ingot shines,
Flows the red slag, the lengthening bar refines;
Cold waves immersed, the glowing mass congeal,
And turn to adamant the hissing STEEL.

A HYMN TO STEEL

Hail, Adamantine Steel, magnetic Lord!
King of the prow, the plowshare, and the sword!
True to the pole, by thee the pilot guides
His steady helm amid the struggling tides,
Braves with broad sail the immeasurable sea,
Cleaves the dark air, and asks no star but Thee.
By thee the plowshare rends the matted plain,
Inhumes in level rows the living grain;
Intrusive forests quit the cultured ground,
And Ceres laughs with golden fillets crowned. —
O'er restless realms when scowling Discord flings
Her snakes, and loud the din of battle rings,
Expiring Strength, and vanquished Courage feel
Thy arm resistless, adamantine Steel!

CLAYS FOR POTTERY

—Ductile clays in wide expansion spread,
Soft as the Cygnet's down, their snow-white bed;
With yielding flakes successive forms reveal,
And change obedient to the whirling wheel.

First China's sons, with early art elate,
Formed the gay tea-pot, and the pictured plate;
Saw with illumined brow and dazzled eyes
In the red stove vitrescent colours rise;
Specked her tall beakers with enamelled stars,
Her monster josses and gigantic jars;
Smeared her huge dragons with metallic hues,
With golden purples and cobaltic blues;
Bade on wide hills her porcelain castles glare,
And glazed Pagodas tremble in the air.

IN THE MINE

—Sable Coal his massy couch extends,
And stars of gold the sparkling pyrite blends;
—Dull-eyed Naptha pours his pitchy streams,
And Jet uncoloured drinks the solar beams,
Bright Amber shines on his electric throne,
And adds ethereal lustre to his own.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Long had the giant-form on Gallia's plains
Inglorious slept, unconscious of his chains;
Round his large limbs were wound a thousand strings
By the weak hands of Cónfessors and Kings;
O'er his closed eyes a triple veil was bound,
And steely rivets locked him to the ground;
While stern Bastile with iron cage enthralls
His folded limbs, and hems in marble walls.
Touched by the patriot-flame, he rent amazed
The flimsy bonds, and round and round him gazed;
Starts up from earth, above the admiring throng
Lifts his colossal form, and towers along;
High o'er his foes his hundred arms he rears,

Plowshares his swords, and pruning hooks his spears;
Calls to the Good and Brave with voice, that rolls
Like Heaven's own thunder round the echoing poles;
Gives to the winds his banner broad unfurled,
And gathers in its shade the living world!

GO, GENTLE GNOMES!

Go, gentle Gnomes! resume your vernal toil,
Seek my chill tribes, which sleep beneath the soil;
On grey-moss banks, green meads, or furrowed lands
Spread the dark mould, white lime, and crumbling sands;
Each bursting bud with healthier juices feed,
Emerging scion, or awakened seed. . . .
Oh, watch where bosomed in the teeming earth,
Green swells the germ, impatient for its birth;
Guard from rapacious worms its tender shoots,
And drive the mining beetle from its roots;
With ceaseless efforts rend the obdurate clay,
And give my vegetable babes to day!

THE HAUNTED, CLASSIC WOOD

Delighted fauns, in wreaths of flowers arrayed,
With tip-toe wood-boys beat the chequered glade;
Alarméd naiads, rising into air,
Lift o'er their silver urns their leafy hair;
Each to her oak the bashful dryads shrink,
And azure eyes are seen through every chink.

THE NEREID MOUNTS HER SEA-HORSE

Her playful sea-horse woos her soft commands,
Turns his quick ears, his webbed claws expands,
His watery way with waving volutes wins,
Or listening librates on unmoving fins.
The Nymph emerging mounts her scaly seat,

Hangs o'er his glossy sides her silver feet,
With snow-white hands her arching veil detains,
Gives to his slimy lips the slackened reins,
Lifts to the star of eve her eye serene,
And chaunts the birth of Beauty's radiant queen.

THE LOVES UNSPEAKABLE OF PLANTS

Botanic Muse, who in this latter age,
Led by your airy hand the Swedish sage. . . .
Say on each leaf how tiny graces dwell;
How laugh the Pleasures in the blossom's bell;
How insect Loves arise on cobweb wings,
Aim their light shafts, and point their little stings. . . .
Sweet blooms Genista in the myrtle shade,
And ten fond brothers woo the haughty maid.
Two knights before thy fragrant altar bend,
Adored Melissa! and two squires attend.
Meadia's soft chains five suppliant beaux confess,
And hand in hand the laughing belle address;
Alike to all, she bows with wanton air,
Rolls her dark eye, and waves her golden hair.
Woody with long care, Curcuma cold and shy
Meets her fond husband with averted eye:
Four beardless youths the obdurate beauty move
With soft attentions of Platonic love. . . .
The freckled Iris owns a fiercer flame,
And three unjealous husbands woo the dame.
Cupressus dark disdains his dusky bride,
One dome contains them, but two beds divide.
The proud Osyris flies his angry fair,
Two houses hold the fashionable pair. . . .
When the young hours amid her tangled hair
Wove the fresh rose-bud, and the lily fair,
Proud Gloriosa led three chosen swains,

The blushing captives of her virgin chains—
 When Time's rude hand a bark of wrinkles spread
 Round her weak limbs, and silvered o'er her head,
 Three other youths her riper years engage,
 The flattered victims of her wily age.
 When heaven's high vault condensing clouds deform,
 Fair Amaryllis flies the incumbent storm,
 Seeks with unsteady steps the sheltered vale,
 And turns her blushing beauties from the gale.—
 Six rival youths, with soft concern impressed,
 Calm all her fears, and charm her cares to rest. . . .
 Queen of the marsh, imperial Drosera treads
 Rush-fringed banks, and moss-embroidered beds;
 Redundant folds of glossy silk surround
 Her slender waist, and trail upon the ground. . . .
 And five fair youths with duteous love comply
 With each soft mandate of her moving eye. . . .
 Weak with nice sense, the chaste Mimosa stands,
 From each rude touch withdraws her timid hands;
 Oft as light clouds o'erpass the Summer-glade,
 Alarmed she trembles at the moving shade;
 And feels, alive through all her slender form,
 The whispered murmurs of the gathering storm;
 Shuts her sweet eyelids to the approaching night,
 And hails with freshened charms the rising light.
 Veiled, with gay decency and modest pride,
 Slow to the mosque she moves, an eastern bride;
 There her soft vows unceasing love record,
 Queen of the bright seraglio of her Lord. . . .
 Where frowning Snowden bends his dizzy brow
 O'er Conway, listening to the surge below;
 Retiring Lichen climbs the topmost stone,
 And drinks the aerial solitude alone—
 Bright shine the stars unnumbered o'er her head,

And the cold moonbeam gilds her flinty bed;
 While round the rifted rocks hoarse whirlwinds breathe,
 And dark with thunder sail the clouds beneath.
 The steepy path her plighted swain pursues,
 And tracks her light steps o'er the imprinted dew;
 Delighted Hymen gives his torch to blaze,
 Winds round the crags, and lights the mazy ways;
 Sheds o'er their secret vows his influence chaste,
 And decks with roses the admiring waste. . . .
 Fair Chundra smiles amid the burning waste,
 Her brow unturbanned, and her zone unbraced;
 Ten brother-youths with light umbrella shade
 Or fan with busy hands the panting maid. . . .
 Deep in wide caverns and their shadowy aisles,
 Daughter of Earth, the Chaste Truffelia smiles;
 On silver beds, of soft asbestus wove,
 Meets her gnome-husband, and avows her love. . . .
 A hundred virgins join a hundred swains,
 And fond Adonis leads the sprightly trains. . . .
 Licentious Hymen joins their mingled hands,
 And loosely twines the meretricious bands.—
 And the Loves laugh at all but Nature's laws.

SIR RICHARD ARKWRIGHT'S INVENTION

With wiry teeth Revolving Cards release
 The tangled knots, and smoothe the ravelled fleece;
 Next moves the Iron Hand with fingers fine,
 Combs the wide card, and forms the eternal line;
 Slow with soft lips, the Whirling Can acquires
 The tender skeins, and wraps in rising spires;
 With quickened pace Successive Rollers move,
 And these retain, and those extend the Rove:
 Then fly the Spoles, the rapid axles glow,
 And slowly circumvolves the labouring wheel below.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR TURNED BEAST

Prone to the earth he bends his brow superb,
Crops the young floweret and the bladed herb;
Lolls his red tongue, and from the reedy side
Of slow Euphrates laps the muddy tide.
Long eagle plumes his arching neck invest,
Steal round his arms, and clasp his sharpened breast;
Dark brinded hairs in bristling ranks, behind,
Rise o'er his back, and rustle in the wind,
Clothe his lank sides, his shrivelled limbs surround,
And human hands with talons print the ground.
Silent in shining troupes the Courtier-throng
Pursue their monarch, as he crawls along;
E'en Beauty pleads in vain with smiles and tears,
Nor Flattery's self can pierce his pendant ears.

THE DIAMOND BEETLE

From his glassy horns and pearly eyes,
The diamond-beetle darts a thousand dyes;
Mounts with enamelled wings the vesper gale,
And wheeling shines in adamantine mail.

HALF-ROSE, HALF-BIRD

(That offspring which is begotten of the mating of the
Rose with the Nightingale.)

—When a Nightingale in eastern bowers
On quivering pinion woos the Queen of flowers;
Inhales her fragrance, as he hangs in air,
And melts with melody the blushing fair;
Half-rose, half-bird, a beauteous monster springs,
Waves his thin leaves, and claps his glossy wings;
Long horrent thorns his mossy legs surround,
And tendril-talons root him to the ground;

Green films of rind his wrinkled neck o'erspread,
And crimson petals crest his curléd head;
Soft-warbling beaks in each bright blossom move
And vocal Rosebuds thrill the enchanted grove! . . .
While on white wings descending houris throng,
And drink the floods of odour and of song!

POLAR LANDSCAPE

With milky light the white horizon streams,
And to the moon each sparkling mountain gleams.-
Slow o'er the printed snows with silent walk
Huge shaggy forms across the twilight stalk;
And ever and anon with hideous sound
Burst the thick ribs of ice, and thunder round.



BEILBY PORTEUS, D.D.,

1731-1809

LIKE many distinguished English churchmen, Porteus escaped smugness through a certain magnanimity of heart and sympathetic reach of mind. But, unlike many of them, he was not content just to point out a future heaven for man, but he was filled with a passion for human freedom and betterment in this existence.

Porteus' father was a Virginia planter who loved and idolized his clever son. The father must needs supervise personally the education of his son in England. He was determined that nothing should stand in the way of his child's growing up to distinction. . . . He turned over his property to overseers, who later proved knaves and by systematic thievery, reduced the plantation to one fourth its value.

The future bishop, returning his father's love and devotion, gave himself with zeal and passion to his studies . . . and at Cambridge became a fellow, and won the mathematics prize, and the Classic Medal. . . .

On the decease of his father, the enormous and universal fact of death laid hold on the poet's youth, and, for a while, his grief was not to be appeased.

It was then that he won the Seaton prize for his poem "Death."

His loss, in being bereaved of the one person he loved, became deep and general enough to bring to his poem somewhat of the motion of universal death that dances through

the drawings of Holbein, that lends a touch of the unique to Thomas Lovell Beddoes—as if one should meet a skeleton nonchalantly walking down the street in the midst of the living. . . .

Porteus ran the further race toward distinction in the sight of two Fathers: the deceased one, who had begot him in the flesh, and the orthodox God, of whose existence he was assured, as ruler of the universe.

Porteus became Bishop of Chester; he became bishop of London.

Though strictly orthodox, he was against coercion of any kind, believing that the infinite God needed no alliance of puny human violence to help him bring about the fulfilment of his ultimate will and way; and that persuasion, not force, should be the handmaid of religion. He was strongly against the persecution of Catholics and Dissenters, while “regretting their blindness.”

The good Bishop Burnet held the same opinions—the Bishop who strove for the conversion of Rochester, on his deathbed.

Porteus was greatly instrumental in the abolishing of black slavery in the British Dominions. . . .

He is the original author of the oft-quoted lines—

One murder made a villain,
Millions, a hero. Princes were privileged
To kill, and numbers sanctified the crime.—

War its thousands slays,
Peace, its ten thousands.

A lesser Blair.

I quote a passage from his poem “Death”—a tremendous vision of Hades, starving for souls, and half-believing death has come to an end—when it rises to welcome the

surprising advent of the first great-bearded, thousand-year-old Patriarch through its gates.

THE FIRST PATRIARCH ENTERS HADES

Death, though denounced,*
Was yet a distant ill, by feeble arm
Of Age, his sole support, led slowly on.
Not then, as since, the short-lived sons of men
Flocked to his realms in countless multitudes;
Scarce in the course of twice five hundred years
One Solitary Ghost went shivering down
To his unpeopled shores.

ON LOVE

(Unsigned Poem in the "Gentleman's Magazine," July
1731)

Love 's no irregular desire,
No sudden start of raging pain,
Which in a moment grows a fire,
And in a moment cools again.
Not found in the sad sonneteer,
That sings of darts, despair, and chains,
And by whose dismal verse, 't is clear
He wants not heart alone, but brains.
Nor does it centre in the beau
Who sighs by rule, in order dies,
Where all consists in outward show,
And want of wit by dress supplies:
No! Love is something so divine,
Description would but make it less;
'T is what I feel, but can't define,
'T is what I know, but can't express.

* Proclaimed.



WILLIAM FALCONER

Circa 1750

THE Sailor-Poet.

Falconer was born in Fife, Scotland. "His parents, in consequence of some domestic misfortune," says his biographer vague, "removed to a sea-port town in England, where they both died of an epidemic disorder, and left William a destitute orphan."

The boy went to sea,—an apprentice before the mast.

In hours off watch, he procured and read the English poets, and was fired to emulation by them.

In "A Poem, sacred to the memory of Frederick, Prince of Wales," published at Edinburgh, he denominates himself "a hopeless youth, whose vital Page was one sad lengthened tale of woe," and he further describes himself, under the appellation of "Arion"—

Forlorn of heart, and by severe decree
Condemned reluctant to the faithless sea. . . .

Rude adversity . . .

With unrelenting ire his steps opposed,
And every gate of hope against him closed.—

It was during a voyage from Alexandria to Venice that Falconer suffered a shipwreck, in which only three of the crew escaped.

This adventure inspired him to write, in trim, heroic couplets, of the conventional school of Pope, "The Shipwreck, a poem in three cantos, by a SAILOR."

The striking part of this miniature epic was its use of

nautical terms, combined with the usual high-flown heroic language and conventional Classic comparisons and similes. There were footnotes explaining the meaning of these nautical terms, and there was, for frontispiece, an annexed engraving "intended to represent the elevation of a merchant ship, completely rigged, in illustration of the poem."

The success of "The Shipwreck" procured Falconer an appointment to the pursership on *The Royal George*, "one of the finest ships in his Majesty's navy."

Falconer, having discharged his one bolt in "The Shipwreck," thereafter spent his poetic leisure revising and enlarging it.

In the year 1769 he brought out the poem in an enlarged edition, "with other alterations"; setting sail for India on the frigate *Aurora*.

On its departure from the Cape of Good Hope, neither the ship nor a single living being aboard her, were heard of again.

THE SQUALL

A squall deep low'ring blots the southern sky,
Before whose boisterous breath the waters fly,
"Reef topsails, reef" the boatswain calls again!
The halliards and top-bowlines soon are gone,
To clue-lines and reef-tackles next they run:
The shiv'ring sails descend: and now they square
The yards, while ready sailors mount the air.
The weather-earings and the lee they passed;
The reefs enrolled, and every point made fast.
The task above thus finished, they descend,
And vigilant th' approaching squall attend.
It comes resistless, and with foaming sweep,
Upturns the whitening surface of the deep. . . .
Deep on her side the reeling vessel lies—
"Brail up the mizen quick!" the master cries.

THE SHIP IS LOST

In vain the cords and axes are prepared,
For now the audacious seas insult the yard;
High o'er the ship they throw a horrid shade,
And o'er her burst, in terrible cascade.
Uplifted on the surge, to heav'n she flies,
Her shattered top half-buried in the skies,
Then headlong plunging thunders on the ground,
Earth groans! air trembles! and the deeps resound!
Her giant bulk the dread concussion feels,
And, quiv'ring with the wound, in torment reels. . . .
Again she plunges! hark! a second shock
Tears her strong bottom on the marble rock:
Down on the vale of Death, with dismal cries,
The fated victims shudd'ring roll their eyes
In wild despair; while yet another stroke,
With deep convulsion rends the solid oak. . . .
At length asunder torn, her frame divides;
And crashing spreads in ruin o'er the tides. . . .
As o'er the surge the stooping topmast hung,
Still on the rigging thirty seamen clung;
Some, struggling, on a broken crag were cast,
And there by oozy tangles grappled fast;
Awhile they bore th' o'erwhelming billows' rage,
Unequal combat with their fate to wage;
Till all benumbed and feeble they forego
Their slipp'ry hold, and sink to shades below.
Some, from the mainyard-arm impetuous thrown
On marble ridges, die without a groan
Three with PALEMON* on their skill depend,
And from the wreck on oars and rafts descend
Now on the mountain-wave on high they ride,
Then downward plunge beneath th' involving tide;

* Conventional classic name given to Third Mate of wrecked ship.

Till one, who seems in agony to strive,
The whirlwind breakers heave on shore alive;
The rest a speedier end of anguish knew,
And pressed the stony beach, a lifeless crew! . . .
Five only left of all the perished throng
Yet ride the pine which shoreward drives along. . . .
Again the dismal prospect opens round,
The wreck, the shores, the dying, and the drowned!
And see! enfeebled by repeated shocks,
Those two who scramble on th' adjacent rocks,
Their faithless hold no longer can retain,
They sink o'erwhelmed, and never rise again! . . .
Two with ARION* yet the mast upbore,
That now above the ridges reached the shore. . . .
The floods recoil! the ground appears below!
And life's faint embers now rekindling glow;
Awhile they wait th' exhausted waves' retreat,
Then climb slow up the beach with hands and feet.

* Falconer.



CHARLES CHURCHILL

1731-1764

CHARLES CHURCHILL, son of a clergyman, was born in London. He entered Westminster School . . . was matriculated at Oxford, but never resided.

At the age of eighteen he rushed into a clandestine marriage. His married life, thus rashly entered into, was unhappy. He grew estranged from his wife.

He entered the Church, and was curate under his father. He succeeded the latter in his incumbency, after his death.

His salary as a minister was a hundred pounds a year. He eked out this sum by teaching in a girls' school.

Churchill wrote several long poems for which he could not find a publisher. It was not till he brought out "The Rosciad" at his own expense that he won fame . . . fame that came to him overnight, as it did to Byron.

"The Rosciad" levelled a general lightning of attack against all the actors then treading the boards in London. The lightning consisted of more than heat-lightning playing harmlessly through a summer sky; the bolts struck and transfixed. What he said of some of the actors was devastatingly apt. Several were ruined. Of one he said—"he mouthes a sentence as curs mouthe a bone." The audience set up a titter whenever that actor appeared.

The trembling and propitiatory Garrick was the sole actor not adversely criticized. Churchill went light on the women, praising Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Clive.

With the one thousand pounds profit derived from the

sale of "The Rosciad" Churchill was enabled to pay his wife what today is called alimony. He paid his creditors in full . . . having previously been saved from imprisonment in The Fleet for debt, by the father of his dear friend, Lloyd, a fellow poet who composed the prosaic, uninspired poem "The Actor" . . . (Lloyd generously and affectionately admitting that Churchill had beat him).

The politician Wilkes, who had infelicitously married a woman ten years his senior, took a house in London. There foregathered Churchill and other friends: Thomas Potter; Dashwood (Lord de Despenser); Lord Sandwich; Bonnell Thornton.

This house of Wilkes—the gifted, dissolute, charming statesman with the slight obliquity of eye—was an establishment to which all his restless men friends were welcome. It might have been called a club for men unhappy with their wives.

There the group caroused and waxed witty to all hours of the night and morning. No more debauched than the generality of fashionables of the time, on account of their enemies in the world of letters and politics, none of their actions were glossed over . . . they were rated as vile debauchees. It was even said of them that they practiced the Black Art, and that their motto was that of the Abbot of Thelème in Rabelais—"Do what thou wilt be the whole of the Law."

In his poem "Night" Churchill defended himself and his friends . . . confessing openly his zest for "the flowing bowl," and admitting that no matter how heavy the debauch of the night before, he never suffered the ensuing morning head-ache. . . .

A series of satires flowed from Churchill's pen; he attacked with a bludgeon, not a rapier. Pope hired Bully Dawson, head of the Mohawks, a London gang, to walk

beside him with a blackthorn, for defence . . . Churchill strode abroad, defiantly swinging his own blackthorn . . . and it would have taken a very brave enemy to dare confront the great-boned, huge-limbed, ungainly, courageous fellow.

Churchill hated hypocrisy above all things.

His favourite words were "candour" and "reason."

He taught doctrines regarding the equality of women and normality in sex-life amazingly modern in concept.

After he had separated from his wife, he had a love-affair with the daughter of a sculptor . . . eventually took her off to Wales, where they lived six months together . . . he gave her an annuity of fifty pounds, for life.

When Churchill's best friend, Lloyd, suffered imprisonment in the Fleet for debt, the poet ameliorated his confinement by procuring for him a pound a week for his better subsistence, and by subsequently raising a subscription which freed him . . . this, after all Lloyd's other friends, promising much and performing nothing, had left him in the lurch.

In standing by Wilkes during the statesman's quarrel with Lord Bute, Churchill indited the savagest of his satires, "A Prophecy of Famine"—a truculent attack on the whole nation of the Scotch . . . in this satire appears the line that scarcely has an equal in literature, in its characterization of extreme penury—

"Where half-starved spiders prey on half-starved flies."

In his "The Times" Churchill exceeded his former savagery by accusing all England of moral degeneracy and perversion. . . .

Wilkes, in danger of arrest for seditious utterances in his periodical, the "North Briton," was forced to flee to the Continent . . . warning Churchill in time that the same fate impended over him. . . .

Churchill followed Wilkes . . . fell sick of a fever . . . died in France . . . leaving Wilkes his literary executor . . . which service Wilkes, dallying, never performed for the friend that loved him with such devotion.—Wilkes, who inspired friendship in men, as some men of magnetism draw the unrequited, sacrificial love of women—by their very indifference . . . Wilkes, who was not only a politician, but an elegant scholar who brought out editions of Catullus and Theophrastus. . . .

In the beginning of his career, Churchill was relieved when he was ousted from his Church on the petition of his parishioners—because of his irregularity of conduct; he avowed himself now “free to wear his blue coat with gold lace.”

He left for an epitaph—a last slap in the face of the Unco Guid—

“Life to the last enjoyed, here Churchill lies.”

When Lloyd heard of Churchill’s death, he died shortly afterward, of grief.

Wilkes caused a column to be erected, on the grounds of his big estate, to Churchill’s memory, on which the poet was characterized in Latin—“a jolly friend and sharp-witted poet.”

There never was a writer who evoked such a storm of pamphlets and counter-satires, in reply to his successive attacks; and “no poet enjoyed so excessive and short-lived a popularity”; immediately after his demise, his few books, furniture, etc., sold at exorbitant prices, relics of him and of his celebrity . . . a common steel pen going for five pounds . . . it was when musing beside his grave in France, Byron wrote of “The glory and the nothing of a name.”

Churchill’s method of composition: he rambled afield,

gathering and co-ordinating his thoughts; returning, he rapidly set down on paper the lines, which he never altered.

If he had written with more care and polish—they report—he might have ranked among the greatest. They further say—he was too easy, profuse, inconsequential . . . they who “say” forget the instances—frequent ones—when he was incisively and vigorously savage, the moments when his headlong muse rose to the power of a stripped maniac running amuck.

His most terrific attack was levelled at the already-dying Hogarth, in retaliation for a cartoon which that artist had drawn against Churchill’s god-on-earth, Wilkes.

Even Garrick, stirred out of his timidity before the satirist of actors, delivered himself of the opinion that it was “shocking and barbarous.”

Churchill coined the phrase—

“Apt alliteration’s artful aid.”

It was Christopher Smart who precipitated himself from a nobleman’s house, in embarrassed humility, because of the overawing proximity of rank,—leaving his confused, indignant wife to follow as she might. . . . Churchill was of a contrary disposition. He hated, despised, and scorned all petty lordship, and stood in fierce independence against it.

In person, Churchill was massive, gnarly-limbed, Brobdignagian, powerful-bodied . . . eyes large and direct; face inclined to a double chin of power, not flabbiness; nose, generous; lips, aggressively passionate. . . .

“Whose Muse was anger.”

Churchill’s sayings:

—Err, because our fathers erred before.—

Fortune makes folly her peculiar care.—

—Pleased, by hiding all attempts to please.—
 Self still, like oil, upon the surface played.—
 The two extremes appear, like man and wife,
 Coupled together for the sake of strife.—
 Apt alliteration's artful aid.—
 The best things carried to excess are wrong.—
 Even shadows have their shadows too.—
 Fools that we are, like Israel's fools of yore,
 The calf ourselves have fashioned we adore.
 But let true reason once resume her reign,
 This god shall dwindle to a calf again.—
 The generous roughness of the nervous line.—
 —Opinions gave, but gave his reasons too.—
 E'en excellence, unvaried, tedious grows;
 Still in one key, the nightingale would tease.—
 The strange reserve, the proud affected state
 Of upstart knaves grown rich, and fools grown great.—
 And see by night what fools we are by day.—
 Talking himself into a little god.—
 Lustful prudes.—
 Ten thousand mighty nothings in his face.—
 No tribute 's laid on castles in the air.—
 Those hackney strumpets, Prudence and the World.—
 What honest man but would with joy submit
 To bleed with Cato and retire with Pitt?.—
 —Become discreetly all things to all men,
 That all men may become all things to them.—
 They've got the sense to get what we want sense to keep.—
 Nothing but mirth can conquer fortune's spite;
 No sky is heavy if the heart be light.—

No crime's so great as daring to excell.—
Loud as the drum which, spreading terror round,
From emptiness acquires the power of sound.—
Who dare not be my friends, can't be my foes.—
By different methods different men excell;
But where is he who can do all things well?—
—Knew none but the bad part of Law.—
Did ever curse
Travel more sure than in a purse?—
When human beings have their way
To excellence, they hasten to decay.—
All those big looks, which speak a little heart.—
That evil is half-cured, whose cause we know.—
With prudent haste the worldly-minded fool
Forgets the little that he learnt at school.—
Monarchs who wealth and titles can bestow,
Cannot make virtues in succession flow.—
Cowards in calms will say what in a storm
The brave will tremble at, and not perform.—
For public good to bellow all abroad
Serves well the purposes of private fraud.—
The awkward friend
Whose very obligations must offend.—
Knave starve not in the land of fools.—
To wear mean falsehood's golden chain.—
Cowards, whose lips with war are hung;
Men truly brave, who hold their tongue.—
All those forms of consequence
Which fools adopt instead of sense.—

'T is with him a certain rule,
The folly 's proved when he calls fool.—
Pointing at graves, and in the rear,
Trembling and talking loud, went Fear.—
To Heaven (for there we all apply
For help, when there 's no other nigh)!.—
What is familiar men neglect
However worthy of respect.—
How pleased is every paltry elf
To prate about that thing, himself.—
Pluck a rose from every thorn.—
Through dirt who scruples to approach,
At Pleasure's call, to take a coach?.—
'T is good in every case, you know,
To have two strings unto your bow.—
Wise men are intent
Evils at distance to prevent,
Whilst fools the evils first endure,
And then are plagued to seek a cure.—
Behold the grand procession go,
All moving on, cat after kind.—
Liberty which
On the great stock of slavery grows.—
In plain and decent garb arrayed
With the prim Quaker, Fraud, came Trade.—
Men of real sense
Who neither lightly give, nor take offense.—
'T is a brave debt which gods on men impose
To pay with praise the merit e'en of foes.—
Those men who hold
No argument but power, no god but gold.—

Each dish at Wildman's of sedition smacks;
Blasphemy may be gospel at Almack's.—
Envy her own destroyer shall become.—
All were mad, but mad in different ways.—
That to be saved we must be more undone.—
A devil must, if born there, love his hell.—
The proud will rather lose than ask their way.—
'Gainst prejudice all arguments are weak;
Reason herself without effect must speak.—
That what the wise suspected not, fools know.—
That superstition which pretends
By the worst means, to serve the best of ends.—
There's not one brute so dangerous as man.—
To talk, and, every now and then, to think.—
Talk not of custom, 't is the coward's plea.—
'Gainst fools be guarded; 't is a certain rule,
Wits are safe things, there's danger in a fool.

APPEARANCES TO SAVE

First Order came with solemn step and slow
In measured time his feet were taught to go.
Behind, from time to time, he cast his eye,
Lest he should quit his place, and step awry;
Appearances to save his only care;
So things seemed right, no matter what they are.

THE OLD-FASHIONED ACTOR

As if with heaven he warred, his eager eyes
Planted their batteries against the skies;
Attitude, action, air, pause, start, sigh, groan
He borrowed, and made use of as his own.

By fortune thrown on any other stage,
He might, perhaps, have pleased an easy age;
But now appears a copy, and no more,
Of something better we have seen before.

THE STROLLING PLAYERS

The mighty monarch, in theatric sack,
Carries his whole regalia on his back;
His royal consort heads the female band,
And leads the heir apparent in her hand;
The panniered ass creeps on with conscious pride,
Bearing a future prince on either side.
No choice musicians in this troupe are found
To varnish nonsense with the charms of sound;
No swords, no daggers, not one poisoned bowl;
No lightning flashes here, no thunders roll;
No guards to swell the monarch's train are shown;
No monarch here must be a host alone:
No solemn pomp, no slow procession here;
No Ammon's entry, and no Juliet's bier. . . .
In shabby state they strut, and tattered robe,
The scene a blanket, and a barn the globe:
No high conceits their moderate wishes raise,
Content with humble profit, humble praise.
Let dowdies simper, and let bumpkins stare,
The strolling pageant-hero treads in air:
Pleased for his hour he to mankind gives law,
And snores the next out on a truss of straw.

THE SUREST ROAD TO HEALTH

The surest road to health, say what they will,
Is never to suppose we shall be ill.
Most of those evils we poor mortals know
From doctors and imagination flow.

GOD HELP THE MAN

God help the man condemned by cruel fate
To court the seeming, or the real great!
Much sorrow shall he feel, and suffer more
Than any slave who labours at the oar:
By slavish methods must he learn to please,
By smooth-tongued flattery, that cursed court-disease;
Supple to every wayward mood strike sail,
And shift with shifting humour's peevish gale.
To nature dead, he must adopt vile art,
And wear a smile, with anguish in his heart.
A sense of honour would destroy his schemes,
And Conscience ne'er must speak unless in dreams. . . .
When he hath tamely borne, for many years,
Cold looks, forbidding frowns, contemptuous sneers;
When he at last expects, good easy man!
To reap the profits of his laboured plan,
Some cringing lackey, or rapacious whore,
To favours of the great the surest door;
Some catamite, or pimp, in credit grown,
Who tempts another's wife, or sells his own,
Steps 'cross his hopes, the promised boon denies,
And for some minion's minion claims the prize.

THE CRAFTY TUTOR

A tutor once, more read in men than books,
A kind of crafty knowledge in his looks,
Demurely sly, with high preferment blessed,
His favourite pupil in these words addressed:
"Wouldst thou, my son, be wise and virtuous deemed,
By all mankind a prodigy esteemed?
Be this thy rule; be what men *prudent* call;
Prudence, almighty Prudence, gives thee all.
Keep up appearances; there lies the test;

The world will give thee credit for the rest.
Outward be fair, however foul within;
Sin if thou wilt, but then in secret sin.
This maxim 's into common favour grown,—
Vice is no longer vice, unless 't is known.
Virtue indeed may barefaced take the field;
But vice is virtue when 't is well concealed.
Should raging passion drive thee to a whore,
Let Prudence lead thee to a postern door;
Stay out all night, but take especial care
That Prudence bring thee back to early prayer.
As one with watching and with study faint,
Reel in a drunkard, and reel out a saint."

UNAWED BY NUMBERS

Unawed by numbers, follow Nature's plan;
Assert the rights, or quit the name of man. . . .
Rather stand up, assured with conscious pride,
Alone, than err with millions on thy side.

HOW FEW

Amongst the sons of men how few are known
Who dare be just to merit not their own!
Superior virtue and superior sense
To knaves and fools will always give offense;
Nay, men of real worth can scarcely bear,
So nice is jealousy, a rival there . . .
Thy danger chiefly lies in acting well;
No crime 's so great as daring to excell.

ATTACK ON HOGARTH

Virtue, with due contempt, saw Hogarth stand,
The murderous pencil in his palsied hand.
What was the cause of Liberty to him,

Or what was Honour? let them sink or swim,
So he may gratify, without control,
The mean resentments of his selfish soul.
Let freedom perish; if to freedom true,
In the same ruin Wilkes may perish too.
With all the symptoms of assured decay,
With age and sickness pinched and worn away,
Pale quivering lips, lank cheeks, and faltering tongue,
The spirits out of tune, the nerves unstrung,
Thy body shrivelled up, thy dim eyes sunk
Within their sockets deep, thy weak hams shrunk,
The body's weight unable to sustain,
The stream of life scarce trembling through the vein,
More than half-killed by honest truths which fell,
Through thy own fault, from men who wished thee well,
Canst thou, e'en thus, thy thoughts to vengeance give.
And, dead to all things else, to malice live?
Hence, Dotard, to thy closet; shut thee in;
By deep repentance wash away thy sin;
From haunts of men to shame and sorrow fly,
And, on the verge of death, learn how to die.



THOMAS PENROSE

1743-1779

THE SON of a Cornish clergyman, Thomas Penrose went in for the same career, but was deflected from his religious intent temporarily by "an eager turn to the military and naval line." He embarked in a private expedition against Buenos Ayres, in South America, under the command of Captain Macnamara, "an adventurer of spirit and experience."

"A force partly English, partly Portuguese," it was that they joined—"consisting of the Lord Clive, of sixty-four guns; the Ambuscade, of forty, on board which Penrose acted as lieutenant of marines; the Gloria, of thirty-eight; and some small vessels and storeships. They had on board about five hundred soldiers." . . .

"They advanced to the attack with horns sounding and drums beating; and *everything expressed hope and joy (!)*" . . . they were winning, it seems, after a sturdy four-hour battle with the Spaniards . . . when the Lord Clive mysteriously burst into a climbing heap of flame . . . "all sides of the ship were crowded with naked men, who a few minutes before, reckoned themselves almost in the assured position of wealth and conquest." The enemies' fire, of course, redoubled; and those who did not perish in the flames were either drowned or shot to death in the water. Captain Macnamara was drowned; three hundred and forty men were lost.

This brisk novitiate of God wrote many stanzas like the

following sprightly specimen, to his bride-to-be, Miss Mary Slocock, on the occasion:

Amidst this nobly awful scene,
Ere yet fell slaughter's rage begin,
Ere death his conquests swell,
Let me to love this tribute pay,
For Polly frame this parting lay,
Perhaps my last farewell, *etc.*, *etc.*

On his return to England, his constitution utterly ruined by wounds received in battle, Penrose resumed, where he had left it off, his career in the Church. . . .

I give his poem "A Tale" because it is quite the last expression in moral and didactic mawkishness.

A TALE

(Founded on an incident at St. Vincent's Rocks, 1779)

High on the cliff's tremendous side,
That frowning hung o'er Avon's tide,
Three lasses chanced to stray:
To pluck the casual flow'rets bent,
Regardless of the rough ascent,
They wound their dang'rous way.

Till, slowly mounted to the height,
They turned their view in wild affright
And shudd'ring marked the steep:
O then, what grief bedewed each eye,
To think one slip, one step awry,
Might plunge them in the deep!

A priest whom soft emotions press
To succour damsels in distress,
That instant trod the shore;

With happy strength and steady pace,
Safe to the rock's time-mouldered base
Each trembling nymph he bore.

Learn then this truth—the careless hour
May seek a gay, but treacherous flower,
Whose honey turns to gall:
While the kind parson's timely aid
May rescue many a tott'ring maid,
And—save from many a fall.



WILLIAM HAYLEY

1745-1820

WHEN William Hayley was a child-at-knee, his mother read interminable verse at him. "She wished him to read and write, for she regarded literature as the characteristic of a gentleman."

With that singular lack of humour that abode with him, the child compared himself to "the royal Alfred."

He went to a private school run by the Reverend Mr. Woodeson,—to that same school which Lovibond attended. Here the master's wife, Mrs. Woodeson, priding herself on her knowledge of medicine, devoted much of her time to attendance on the ills of the schoolboys. She treated young Hayley for a fall. The boy nearly died before a regular physician was called in, and was ill for years because of neglected subluxation of three vertebræ. For the rest of his life he moved about with a rapid, lame, sidling walk.

Hayley developed into a very prig of enforced amiability, compelling himself to be continually of a sweet disposition, and openly boasting of his humanity and good deeds.

For several amusing years, the mystic poet, Blake, was in the employment of this man, making drawings to illustrate his poems. Hayley had him down to his place at Felp-ham, and the two did not hit it off together very well . . . though Hayley had created the job for Blake—of illustrating his "Anecdotes on Animals" . . . in his officious humanitarianism, in order to help the poorer poet's poverty.

In his patronizingly saccharine manner, Hayley referred

to Blake as "my good Blake," "our alert Blake," "indefatigable Blake," "ingenious Blake," "that singularly industrious man," etc. What Blake delivered himself of, in turn, hit more to the centre of the target:

"Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache:
Do be my enemy, for friendship's sake."

"I write the rascal thanks: till he and I
With thanks and compliments are quite drawn dry."

And there was yet another couplet, which remains amusingly unprintable.

Hayley, with his forceful and deadly amiability, pursued his first wife into insanity, or, rather, whipped on the predisposition to it that lurked in her blood . . . and his letters to her, when he has at last sent the poor distracted woman away, and wishes to prevent her return—present masterly studies in self-duped hypocrisy.

For Hayley, death was a savoury morsel to mouthe. "Few poets have been more ready than Hayley to offer sepulchral tributes to the dead."

He avows,—“I am ever willing to attend to the claims of the departed,” and “I seem to have been continually engaged in writing a series of epitaphs,” and, “I have since had to lament a lovely female relative of my own . . . her epitaph you shall see in some future day”—wonder was, he did not have it ready beforehand!

He spoke of one who was dead—"the interesting deceased."

Inch by inch, minute by minute, he gloated over the slow disintegration of his illegitimate son, who lay dying of a spinal disease—and whom his first wife had welcomed into the household:

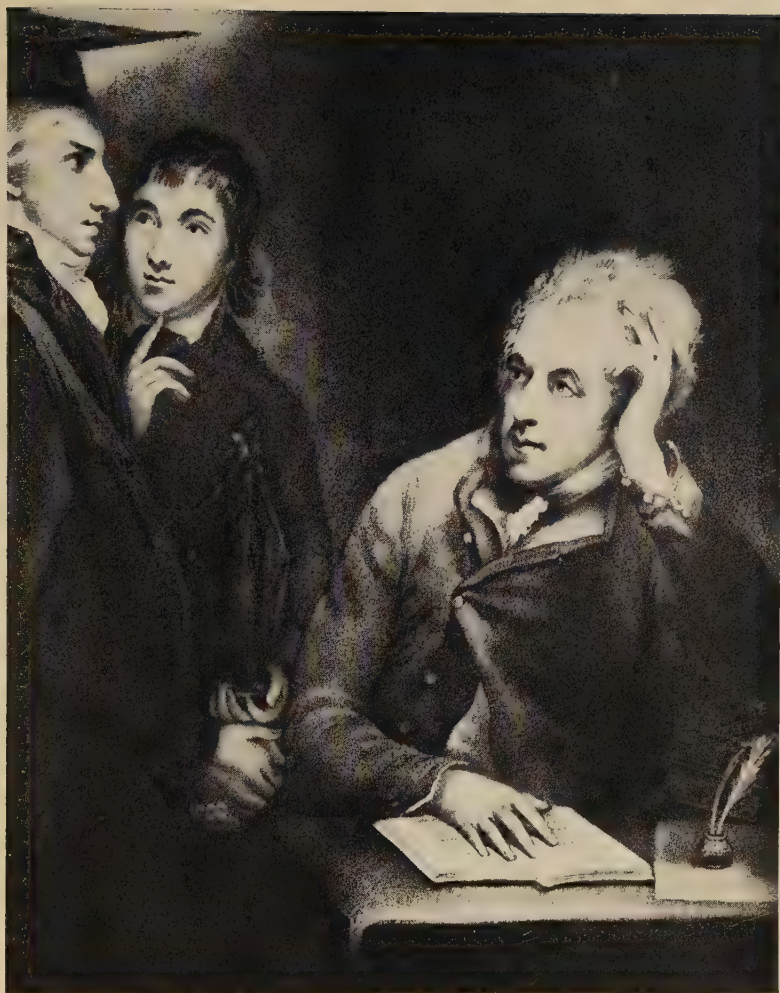
"The dear sufferer"; "my beloved cripple"; "duties of the most serious and distressing nature oblige me to

hover incessantly over my poor, emaciated cripple"; "my darling patient, whose variety of sufferings and mild, magnanimous anguish surpasses everything you can imagine" . . . "now become a poor, helpless heap of emaciated and distorted bones" . . . "most extensive drains on each side of the spine" . . . "a tremendous possibility that he may linger many weeks, and at last drop with the leaf." . . . "I am all anxiety in every fiber for the dear sufferer here" . . . "dear, expiring sufferer whose pale features I am now watching in hourly expectation of his last gasp," . . . "I think it hardly possible for this dear, exhausted, but still magnanimous sufferer to breathe for more than a few hours." . . .

He watched solicitously the features of all his friends, for premonitory signs of disease. He wrote to the Rev. Johnson, concerning his friend Cowper (for whom he had successfully begged a pension from the Government) asking how "our dear, dropsical patient was thriving." And after the death of the author of "The Task," he was solicitous for "particulars of Cowper's grave," and projected a book of elegies to be dedicated "to my angelic darlings," (the deceased Cowper and Hayley jr.), vowing he would "devote the evening of life to poems to both in their memory." As it was, this incredible being wrote a book of sonnets on his son's death.

Living the life of the retired country gentleman of literary pretensions, Hayley was pleased to dub himself "the Hermit of Felpham," and signed his epistles in a pretentiously playful vein, "your sympathetic hermit," "your ever-affectionate hermit," "your faithful hermit," "your faithful old hermit," "your old recluse," "your faithful friend, the hermit," and so on, to endless variations.

Hayley possessed one of the finest libraries in England. In that library he hung one of his own portraits, its head "encircled by cooing doves"—among other portraits of the



PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM HAYLEY

great poets of England. An estimate of himself that, incidentally, was held by many. For his "Triumphs of Temper" brought him prolonged renown in England and in America, and it ran through many editions. And he was offered the poet-laureateship, and refused it.

This ghoulishly cheerful person who forced himself into a continuous, iron discipline of benevolence, reduced his property considerably by his benefactions and donations "to worthy persons"—and how he must have made them writhe in the doing of his acts of goodness!

Hayley was considerably above the middle stature; he looked like a cross between a minister and military man; his face was sallow, and there was the right eyebrow up-curved to a sinister lift that showed, that, despite the man's firm self-discipline in cheerfulness and benevolence, there was a seething, suppressed hatefulness within.

In every detail he followed what was supposed to be the ways of life of a genius—

"I always compose a few verses on awaking."

He devoted the day to study "behind Venetian blinds," because of weak eyes.

For exercise he "rode fiercely on horseback, carrying a green umbrella aloft, to shield his eyes from the sun." The one forthright, dashing thing he did—riding hardily ahorse! . . . and he walked in his garden, sidling along at great speed, a closed umbrella in one hand, a cane in the other, to help on his progress. . . .

This man . . . who "invested with endearing epithets every person and everything of which he had occasion to speak" (even having had the insipid temerity to call Homer—"darling Homer"), was a frightful torturer of souls with his damned, continual, inflexible, petty kindnesses that there was no escape from, except in flight from his vicinity.

What great, secret, gloating satisfaction he must have

derived, when he had his "old, pensionary nurse read all of Gibbon aloud to him"—to save his eyes . . . and in trying electricity as a cure-all on his "humble neighbours." Indeed it is recorded that he caused a hopeless paralytic to walk, with several great applications of the battery . . . the walker dying two months after the application. . . .

About this time the "morning tub" of cold water was coming into fashion, and Hayley was gleeful over his invention of a shower-bath that he invented by the tipping over of a receptacle from overhead. . . .

He who was "ever ready to weep with those who weep"—wept, overcome with gentle snobbery, when a noblewoman praised his verses. . . .

A visitor to Felpham—to a friend—"you will ask what we read aloud—chiefly manuscript poems and plays of Hayley's."

Byron, on Hayley—

"His style in youth or age is still the same—
Forever foolish and forever tame."

"Hayley's last work, and worst—until his next!"

Hayley's last words, on his deathbed—

"Christ, have mercy upon me!"

THE FAITHFUL WIVES

It was their chance, ere judgment was mature,
When glittering toys the infant mind allure,
Following their parents' avaricious rule,
To wed, with hopes of bliss, a wealthy fool.
When Time removed Delusion's veil by stealth,
And showed the drear vacuity of wealth;
When sad Experience proved the bitter fate

Of Beauty coupled to a senseless Mate,
These gentle Wives still gloried to submit;
These, though invited by alluring Wit,
Refused in paths of lawless joy to range,
Nor murmured at the lot they could not change:
But, with a lively sweetness, unoppressed
By a dull Husband's lamentable jest,
Their constant rays of gay good-humour spread
A guardian glory round their idiots' head.

SATAN'S ENVY

—Darts such a glance of rage and envious hate
As Satan cast on Eden's blissful state,
When on our parents first he fixed his sight,
And, undelighted, gazed on all delight.

THE UNEXPECTED PROPOSAL

Quick to his voice the startled Virgin turned;
With wonder, hope and joy her bosom burned:
With sweet confusion, flurried and amazed,
On his attractive form she wildly gazed.
Full on her thought the friendly visions rushed;
Blushing she viewed him, viewed him still, and blushed;
And, soft Affection quickening at the sight,
Perchance had swooned in fullness of delight,
But that her Father's voice, with quick control,
Recalled the functions of her fainting soul.

"OLD CLO'ES"

For now the heralds of the London day
Sing their loud matins in the uncrowded way;
Th' impatient milkmaid now, with early din,
Screams to the rattle of the pail of tin;

With Sweeps' faint cry, and, latest of the crew,
The deep-toned music of the murmuring Jew.

APATHY

Observe the Fiend, that Nature scorned to frame,
Offspring of Pride, and Apathy his name!
Passions he ne'er can feel, and ne'er impart,
A miscreated Imp, without a heart,
In place of which his subtle parent pinned
A bladder filled with circulating wind,
Which seems with mimic life the mass to warm,
And gives false vigour to his bloated form.

ENNUI

A thousand shapes he wears, now pert, now prim,
Pursues each grave conceit, or idle whim;
In arms, in arts, in government engages,
With Monarchs, Poets, Politicians, Sages;
But drops each work, the moment it 's begun,
And trying all things, can accomplish none.

XANTIPPE IN HELL

The vase she emptied on the Sage's head,
Hangs o'er her own a different shower to shed;
For drop by drop distilling liquid fire,
It fills the Vixen with new tropes of ire.

EFFECT OF THE FIEND OF BRANDY ON THE BRANDY- DRINKING FEMALES OF BRITAIN

—The sly fiend, of every art possessed,
Steals on the affection of her Female guest,
And by her soft address seducing each,
Eager she plies them with a Brandy Peach:
Effects more dire, thus tempting to deceive,

The Apple wrought not in the soul of Eve;
Howe'er disguised, in Jelly or in Jam,
Spleen has no poison surer than the Dram.

SWIFT AND THE HOUYNYNYMS

See o'er the crowd a throne of vapours lift
That strange and motley form, the shade of Swift!
Vain of his power, of elocution proud,
In mystic language he harangued the crowd.
The bounds he marked, with measure so precise,
Of Equine virtue, and of Human vice,
That, cursing nature's gifts, without remorse,
Each sullen hearer wished himself a Horse.

HOW FEW, MY FRIEND—

(The Temple of Fame)

How few, my friend, though millions boast the aim,
Leave in this temple an unclouded name!
Vain the attempt, in every age and clime,
Without the slow conductors, toil and time,
Without that secret, soul-impelling power,
Infused by genius in the natal hour;
And vain, with these, if bright occasion's ray,
Fail to illuminate the doubtful way.

FRANCIS BACON

Defects more hateful to ingenious eyes
In Adulation's servile arts arise;
Mean Child of Int'rest! as her parents base!
Her charms Deformity! her wealth Disgrace!
Dimmed by her breath, the light of learning fades;
Her breath the wisest of mankind degrades,
And Bacon's self, for mental glory born,
Meets, as her slave, our pity and our scorn.

EPITAPH, ON A PIOUS OLD MAN

These hallowed stones an English heart enfold
Warm, tender, steady, simple, just, and bold,
A Christian who fulfilled his Saviour's law;
To man with charity, to God with Awe.

TO MIGRATORY SWALLOWS

Ye gentle birds that perch aloof,
And smoothe your pinions on my roof,
Preparing for departure hence,
Ere winter's ugly threats commence;
Like you, my soul would smoothe her plume
For longer flights beyond the tomb.
May God, by whom is seen and heard
Departing man and wandering bird,
In mercy mark us for his own,
And guide us to the land unknown.



THOMAS DAY

1746-1790

ONE OF the most remarkable of all the English Eccentrics.

At an early age Day joined the provincial literary coterie gathered about Dr. Erasmus Darwin and Anne Seward, "the swan of Lichfield."

"Mr. Day, of Bear-hill, in Berkshire. He was then about twenty-four. . . . Mr. Day looked the philosopher. Powder and fine clothes were, at that time, the appendages of gentlemen. Mr. Day wore neither. He was tall and stooped in the shoulders, full made, but not corpulent; and in his meditative and melancholy air a degree of awkwardness and dignity were blended . . . features interesting and agreeable amidst the traces of a severe smallpox . . . there was a sort of weight upon the lids of his large hazel eyes . . . sable hair, which, Adam-like, curled about his brow."

"Day, in the second year after his arrival at Lichfield, published his poem 'The Dying Negro,' and his 'moral tale for the Young,' 'Sanford and Merton,' which by wise parents is put into every youthful hand."

"In the course of the year 1770 Mr. Day stood for a full-length picture to Mr. Wright of Derby . . . drawn as in the open air, the surrounding sky is tempestuous, lurid, and dark. He stands leaning his left arm against a column inscribed to Hampden. Mr. Day looks upwards, as enthusiastically meditating on the contents of a book, held in his

dropped right hand . . . a flash of lightning plays in Mr. Day's hair."

"Mr. Day's father died during his son's infancy, and left him an estate of twelve hundred pounds per annum.

"Soon after, his mother married a gentleman by the name of Phillips. The author of this narrative has often heard Mr. Day describe him as one of those common characters, who seek to supply their inherent want of consequence, by a busy, teasing interference in circumstances, with which they have no real concern." Day was annoyed excessively by this man. But, instead of kicking him out, his first act on coming of age and into possession of his estate, was to settle four hundred pounds upon Mr. Phillips, his step-father, for life. "This bounty to a man who needlessly mortified and embittered so many years of his own infancy and life evinced a very elevated mind."

Day was rejected by a young woman who "claimed the triumph of a lettered heart." Even at that period he "was a rigid moralist, who proudly imposed on himself cold abstinence, even from the most innocent pleasures." . . .

"He thought it, however, his *duty* to marry . . . he resolved, if possible his wife should have a taste for literature and science, and for patriotic philosophy . . . he resolved also, that she should be as simple as a mountain girl, in her dress, her diet, and her manners; fearless and intrepid as the Spartan wives and Roman heroines . . . there was no finding such a creature ready-made. . . .

"Credentials were procured of Mr. Day's moral probity . . . with Mr. Bicknel, then a Barrister . . . he journeyed to Shrewsbury, to explore the orphan asylum for foundling girls . . . he selected two girls of twelve years each; both beautiful; one fair, with flaxen locks, and light eyes; he called her Lucretia. The other, a clear auburn brunette,

with darker eyes, more glowing bloom, and chestnut tresses, he called Sabrina. . . .

"Mr. Day went instantly into France with these girls; not taking an English servant, that they might receive no ideas, except those which he himself might impart.

"They teased and perplexed him; they quarreled and fought incessantly; they sickened of the smallpox; they chained him to their bedside by crying, and screaming if they were ever left a moment with any person who could not speak to them in English. He was obliged to sit up with them many nights; to perform for them the lowest offices of assistance.

"They lost no beauty by their disease. Soon after they had recovered, crossing the Rhone with his wards on a tempestuous day, the boat overset. Being an excellent swimmer he saved them both, though with difficulty and danger to himself.

"Mr. Day came back to England in eight months, heartily glad to separate the little squabblers. Sabrina was become the favourite. He placed the fair Lucretia with a chamber milliner. She behaved well and became the wife of a respectable linen draper of London."

Returning to Lichfield, "thither he led the beauteous Sabrina, then thirteen years old . . . and resumed his preparations for implanting in her young mind the characteristic virtues of Arria, Portia, and Cornelia. . . .

"His experiments had not the success he wished and expected. Her spirit could not be armed against the dread of pain, and the appearance of danger. When he dropped melted sealing wax upon her arms she did not endure it heroically, nor when he fired pistols at her petticoats, which she believed to be charged with balls, could she help starting aside, or suppress her screams.

"When he tried her fidelity in secret-keeping, by telling

her of well-invented dangers to himself . . . he once or twice detected her of having imparted them to the servants, and to her playfellows.

"She betrayed an aversion to the study of books, and of the rudiments of science, which gave little promise of ability, that should, some day, be responsible for the education of youths, who were to emulate the Gracchi.

"Mr. Day persisted in these experiments . . . his watchful cares had precluded all knowledge of the value of money, the reputation of beauty, and its concomitant desire of ornamented dress . . . the only inducement therefore, was the natural desire of pleasing her protector. . . .

"After a series of fruitless trials, Mr. Day renounced all hope of moulding Sabrina into the being his imagination had formed . . . he placed her at a boarding school. . . .

"He now courted the very Miss Honora Sneyd . . . for whom the gallant and unfortunate Major Andre's inextinguishable passion . . . is on record. . . .

"Mr. Day offered Honora his philosophic hand. She admired his talents; she revered his virtues; she tried to school her heart into softer sentiments in his favour . . . she did not succeed . . . and ingenuously told him so.

"Her sister, Elizabeth Sneyd, one year younger than herself . . . very pretty, very sprightly, very artless, and very engaging . . . to her the yet love-luckless sage transferred his heart. . . . Elizabeth told Mr. Day she could have loved him, if he had acquired the manners of the world, instead of those austere singularities of air, habit, and address that were his. . . .

"He told Elizabeth that, for her sake, he would renounce his prejudices to external refinements, and try to acquire them. He would go to Paris for a year and commit himself to dancing and fencing masters. He did so: stood daily an hour or two in the frames, to screw back his shoulders, and

to point his feet; he practiced the military gait, the fashionable bow, minuets, and cotillons; but it was too late; habits, so long fixed, could no more than partially be overcome. The endeavour, made at intervals, and by visible effort, was more really ungraceful than the natural stoop, and the unfashionable air.

"The studied bow on entrance, the suddenly recollected assumption of attitude prompted the risible instead of the admiring sensation; neither was the showy dress, in which he came back to his fair one, a jot more becoming."

Miss Elizabeth Sneyd ultimately rejected his addresses.

At last he succeeded in getting married to "the pretty and elegant Miss Esther Mills, of Derbyshire, who, with modern acquirements, and amongst modish luxuries, suited to her large fortune, had cultivated her understanding by books and her virtues by benevolence."

But it was not until "after years of her modest, yet tender devotion to his talents and merit, that he deigned to ask Miss Mills if she could, for his sake, resign all the world calls pleasures . . . if, with him, she could resolve to employ after the ordinary comforts of life were supplied, the surplus of her affluent fortune in clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry; retiring with him into the country, and shunning, through remaining existence, the infectious taint of human society. . . .

"They settled in the country . . . no carriage, no appointed servant about Mrs. Day's own person, no luxury of any sort. Music, in which she was a distinguished proficient, was deemed trivial. She banished her harpsichord and music-books. Frequent experiments upon her temper, and her attachment, were made by him, whom she lived but to obey and love. Over these she often wept, but never repined. No wife, bound in the strictest fetters, as to the incapacity of claiming separate maintenance, ever made more absolute

sacrifices to the most imperious husband, than did this lady, whose independence had been secured, and of whom nothing was demanded as a duty. . . .

"Some eight or ten years after his marriage, the life of this singular being became, in its meridian, a victim to one of his uncommon systems. He thought highly of the gratitude, generosity, and sensibility of horses; and that whenever they were disobedient, unruly, or vicious, it was owing to previous ill-usage . . . he reared, fed, and tamed a favourite foal. When it was time it should become serviceable, disdaining to employ a horse breaker, he would use it to the bit and burden, himself.

"He was not a good horseman. The animal, disliking his new situation, heeded not the soothing voice to which he had been accustomed. He plunged, threw his master, and then, with his heels, struck him on the head an instantly fatal blow.

"It was said Mrs. Day never afterwards saw the sun; that she lay in bed, into the curtains of which no light was admitted during the day, and only rose to stray alone through her garden, when night gave her sorrows congenial gloom. She survived this adored husband two years, and then died, broken-hearted, for his loss."

THE DYING NEGRO

(The negro, who is the hero of Day's poem, was forbidden to marry a white woman—his fellow servant; he went off and got married in spite of his master's command . . . when he came back to the ship of which his owner was captain, he was locked up, to be taken to America as a slave. He stabbed himself to death. The epistle from which the following specimens are taken, was supposed to be his letter to his recent wife, before he committed suicide.)

BETTER IN THE UNTIMELY GRAVE

—Better in the untimely grave to rot,
The world and all its cruelties forgot,
Than dragged once more beyond the Western Main,
To groan beneath some dastard planter's chain,
Where my poor countrymen in bondage wait
The slow enfranchisement of lingering fate. . . .
For I have seen them, ere the dawn of day,
Roused by the lash, begin their cheerless way . . .
Then like the dull, unpitied brutes repair
To stalls as wretched and as coarse a fare.

THE TIME SHALL COME

(Prophetic of the Rebellion)

The time shall come, the fated hour is nigh,
When guiltless blood shall penetrate the sky.
Amid these horrors, and involving night,
Prophetic visions flash before my sight;
Eternal Justice wakes, and in their turn
The vanquished triumph and the victors mourn. . . .
War mounts his iron car, and at his wheels
In vain soft Pity weeps, and Mercy kneels;
He breathes a savage rage through all the host,
And stains with kindred blood the impious coast. . . .
I see the warrior gasping on the ground,
I hear the flaming cities crash around!



WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES

1762-1850

THOUGH Schiller wrote better when he sat just over a half-opened drawer in which lay rotting apples,—wine-drinking and love-making (successful or disastrous), are the classic and salient inspirations of the poet.

William Lisle Bowles had evidently to be unhappy in his love before he could indite tolerable verse. His once-famous "Fourteen Sonnets written chiefly on picturesque spots during a journey" were so inspired; as were the sonnets subsequently added to them.

When a young student, he first fell in love with a niece of Sir William Romilly, and was denied her hand "because of his uncertain prospects." To assuage his disappointment he made a tour of the north of England, of Scotland, and of a part of Europe—landing at Antwerp and going from that place up the Rhine to Switzerland.

It was during this tour that he composed the "Fourteen Sonnets" that inspired Coleridge to indulge in the extravagant statement—"they have done my heart more good than all the other books I have read excepting the Bible" and, a student of seventeen, to copy them over forty times in order to insure their further circulation among his friends and acquaintances.

Viewed in the light of the present day, their only strength is that of sugar-sweetened water, with no invigorating or inspiring qualities left. But, in that early day, the brandy had not yet evaporated. They came authentically first-hand

to Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey. And had much to do with the defeat of the Classic school of verse by the Romantic. . . .

And, as these "Fourteen Sonnets" sprang from the author's disappointed love, so the sonnets added to them in subsequent editions got being from heart-break . . . from a heart-break still greater . . . it was while he was deacon at Knoyle that he fell in love with Harriet Wake, the daughter of the Rector. And again "because of uncertain prospects" he was made to suffer.

The lovers, forbidden to see each other, met in secret . . . and Harriet soon died of a fever . . . it was now that Bowles wrote his additional sonnets.

But Bowles was not to go long without a mate. Magdalen, Harriet's sister, determinedly lurking in the offing, herself no "catch," snatched up the young poetic clergyman. And they were married.

Bowles was a sweetish, little, amiable, absent-minded fellow, easily imposed upon; and, in spite of the fact that many of his friends did not like her, his tall, homely, frigid wife with her practical, sweeping eye, was just the mate he needed for his protection.

Magdalen Bowles kept a maternal watch over him for fifty years . . . while the little fellow threshed about irritably looking for the other silk stocking that she grimly pointed out to him put on the same leg on which he had drawn the first . . . or while he timidly measured off the distance from Salisbury Cathedral to his house, to make sure, before taking up his residence, that there would be no possibility of the spire's striking his roof, in case it fell. . . .

Bowles was the victim of uncountable other absurdities of timidity and absent-mindedness: as in the instance when he combined both traits; fearing to ride his horse down a steep hill, to avoid a tumble, he dismounted, and walked

along . . . and, at the bottom of the hill, he forgot to remount; the horse slipping the bridle and running back to the stable, and leaving Bowles to promenade along with the reins still over his arm. . . .

An instance more laughable of his absent-mindedness: "when once presenting a Bible to a friend, he testified blandly on the blank-leaf that it was 'Presented by the Author.'"

On inheriting a substantial income Bowles, no longer the victim of "uncertain prospects," sank back in his easy chair to enjoy his comfort and to write his execrably uninspired longer poems—feeding his two swans, Snowdrop and Lily, from the window of the breakfast room . . . which leaned over the garden lake . . . and listening, every morning, to his watch, to discover how far his deafness had progressed since the morning before. . . .

One of the most persistent of Bowles' fears was that of being bitten by a mad dog. He wore stout overalls, when out of the house, in order to obviate such an accident.

On the death of his tall, determined, masterful spouse the clergyman-poet, at fourscore, underwent a pitiable collapse, and doddered about, a gentle, timourous husk of being, till death took him as well.

The one excitement of Bowles' life was his series of pamphlet combats over his critical edition of Pope: a paper war waged with Byron, Campbell, and others, Bowles taking the cudgels up for the Romantics . . . with his pen Bowles was stubborn and combative, and he added to his combativeness the nasty trait of suspecting everyone who disagreed with him of a bad motive. . . .

He loved music: he played the flute, 'cello, and violin.

He could paint a little.

His "Villagers' Verse Book" formed an undoubted pat-

tern for Wordsworth's simplicity that so often fell into ridiculousness. . . .

Quite Wordsworthian is the foreword of Bowles to the book: "The following compositions were written originally to be learned by heart by poor children of my own parish, who have been instructed every Sunday through the summer on the garden lawn before the parsonage house, by Mrs. Bowles. The object which, to the best of my knowledge, is entirely novel, was briefly to describe the most obvious images in country life familiar to every child; and in the smallest compass to connect every distinct picture with the earliest feelings of humanity and piety."

And the poems in the "Villagers' Verse Book" forecast those qualities of Wordsworth of which James Kenneth Steven wrote—

"Two voices are there: one is of the deep . . .
And one is of an old, half-witted sheep . . .
And both, Wordsworth, are thine!"

In Bowles' verse (excepting the sonnets), the voice of the "old, half-witted sheep" predominates to the exclusion of anything like "the voice of the deep."

The Sonnets are of another cloth.

There prevails measurably in them still, for the modern reader, a spirit of gentle beauty.

One of the poems in the "Villagers' Verse Book," minus its moral—

THE APRIL SHOWER

When raindrops, glistening from the thatch,
Like drops of silver run,
Our old, blind grandame lifts the latch
To feel the cheering sun.

She sees no rainbow in the sky,
But when the cuckoo sung,
She thought upon the years gone by
When she was blithe and young.

And another—

THE GLOW-WORM

O, what is this which shows so bright,
And in this lonely place
Hangs out his small, green lamp at night,
The dewy bank to grace!
It is a glow-worm, still and pale
It shines the whole night long,
When only stars, O nightingale,
Seem listening to thy song.

From "The Sonnets"—

O, POVERTY

O, Poverty! though from thy haggard eye,
Thy cheerless mien, of every charm bereft,
Thy brow that Hope's last traces long have left,
Vain Fortune's feeble sons with terror fly;
I love thy solitary haunts to seek.
For Pity, reckless of her own distress;
And Patience, in her pall of wretchedness,
That turns to the bleak storm her faded cheek;
And Piety, that never told her wrong;
And meek Content, whose griefs no more rebel;
And Genius, warbling sweet her saddest song;
And Sorrow, listening to a lost friend's knell,
Long banished from the world's insulting throng;
With thee, and thy unfriended offspring, dwell.

AT DOVER CLIFFS

On these white cliffs, that calm above the flood,
Uplift their shadowing heads, and, at their feet,
Scarce hear the surge that has for ages beat,
Sure many a lonely wanderer has stood,
And, whilst the lifted murmur met his ear,
And o'er the distant billows the still Eve
Sailed slow, has thought of all his heart must leave
Tomorrow; of the friends he loved most dear;
Of social scenes, from which he wept to part:
But if, like me, he knew how fruitless all
The thoughts that would full fain the past recall,
Soon would he quell the risings of his heart,
And brave the wild winds and unhearing tide—
The World his country, and his God his guide.

O, TIME, WHO KNOW'ST A LENIENT HAND

O, Time! who know'st a lenient hand to lay
Softest on sorrow's wound, and slowly thence
(Lulling to sad repose the weary sense)
The faint pang stealest unperceived away;
On thee I rest my only hope at last,
And think, when thou hast dried the bitter tear
That flows in vain o'er all my soul held dear,
I may look back on every sorrow past,
And meet life's peaceful evening with a smile—
As some lone bird, at day's departing hour,
Sings in the sunbeam, of the transient shower
Forgetful, though its wings are wet the while:—
Yet ah! how much must that poor heart endure,
Which hopes from thee, and thee alone, a cure!

LANGUID, AND SAD, AND SLOW

Languid, and sad, and slow, from day to day
I journey on, yet pensive turn to view
(Where the rich landscape gleams with softer hue)
The streams and vales, and hills, that steal away.
So fares it with the children of the earth:
For when life's goodly prospect opens round,
Their spirits beat to tread that fairy ground,
Where every vale sounds to the pipe of mirth.
But them vain hope and easy youth beguiles,
And soon a longing look, like me, they cast
Back on the pleasing prospect of the past:
Yet Fancy points where still far onward smiles
Some sunny spot, and her fair colouring blends,
Till cheerless on their path the night descends!



JAMES HURDIS

1763-1801

"A WIDOW'S only son, a mateless boy, almost the eldest of a train of seven," he lived with his mother and sisters.

Slight and frail, he shunned the games of his school-companions and showed "an early passion for literature, and for music."

"He learned to play upon almost every musical instrument."

After his mother's death, he took his sisters to stay with him in a Sussex village, among the "enormous downs . . . hill behind hill, gigantic family, some near, some far, withdrawing till their faint, expiring tops were almost lost and melted in the air."

Here, curate in his native town, the celibate clergyman and his sisters lived in domestic love and fondness together. "They played music and sang, or roamed afield—" "every bud that blows visiting daily with a bee's desire."

He loved Catherine most, the homeliest of his sisters. On her death he wrote to Cowper—

"My poor little girl, whom I have at last been unable to save. I watched by her nine and thirty nights . . . then, Sir, I was deprived of the gem which . . . never lost its lustre . . . she was the plainest of all my family . . . her figure was good, her action was graceful, but in her countenance there were many defects: she was sensible of it, and would never give me her profile.

"It was her office to play the organ, while her two sisters sang, and I accompanied on the violincello. . . .

"She once entertained the desire to engage in the pursuit of languages. I told her I did not think it the province of a woman. It could never be useful nor ornamental; for the graces of a linguist are masculine."

She secretly followed him "in his grammatical memoranda" while he studied Hebrew "and surprised him by reading the Scriptures in the original, after him."

"Before she died she made me promise I would be buried beside her." . . .

"The whole family have been desirous of a place beside her, and I have enlarged the dimensions of the vault till it will hold seven." . . .

Hurdis loved this ugly sister "so deeply that he could not go to the grave with the body."

After having gone into retirement and having recovered somewhat from his grief, he visited Hayley at Eartham where "he had the pleasing satisfaction of meeting and becoming personally known to Cowper, with whom he had maintained a confidential correspondence for some years."

Hurdis became professor of poetry at Oxford, where he went into residence accompanied by two of his sisters.

He married at thirty-six and had several children.

Looking back in fond retrospect to his native village in the Sussex downs, he printed at his own private press in 1800, his "Favourite Village" . . . the best of his efforts . . . a long descriptive poem in blank verse rife with opulent passages . . . in which he took the advice of Keats before the latter was alive to give it, of "loading every rift with ore."

When Hurdis died, Hayley, you may be sure, was to the immediate fore with an epitaph ranking among his best—

“Hurdis, ingenuous Poet and Divine!
A tender sanctity of thought was thine;
To thee no sculptured tomb could prove so dear
As the fond tribute of a sister's tear.
For earth, who shelters in her vast embrace
The sleeping myriads of the human race,
No heart in all that multitude has known
Whose love fraternal could surpass thine own.”

Hurdis “was tall, but well-proportioned: his countenance serene and lively: of fair complexion, with flaxen hair. His disposition was meek and affectionate, benevolent, cheerful. Yet he was occasionally irritable and impatient. With intimate friends he was affable, polite, and familiar; but in mixed company, generally reserved.”

“He was ever anxious to discharge the duties of his profession to the utmost of his abilities, for his piety was fervent and unaffected.”

Hurdis says of his own verse—

Humane and Christian is the Muse, and fond
Of every object, cheerful or sedate,
Which rural scenes afford.

He calls it—

Song dropping honey, verse distilling balm.

In an address to a nightingale—

Be my song like thine, to critic rules
Never obedient, warbled as I please.
Fancy and nature shall dance hand in hand
While we our plaintive numbers wildly sweet
Irregularly sing.

While not so "*wildly* sweet" and defiant of "critic rules," as he pronounced it, his verse is often like flowers cast down in heaps. And it is radiant with felicitous miniatures of the countryside and village he loved. He recognizes this pictorial faculty of his, by styling himself "the painter-poet."

Examples of exact and felicitous strokes abound—in line after line—a few of which I subjoin, at random:

The rooks crying with a thousand voices
From a whistling cloud of wings.—

The pigeon's amorous bow
And note of love profound.—

The naked February wood
Assemblage multitudinous of boughs.—

The giant oak
Uprears contorted its enormous arm
In its thin frippery of lichens dressed
Even to its utmost finger.—

Caterpillars
Spread their muslin camps around,
Pavilioned richer than the proudest king.—

Eager to reach the meadow-pasture after the day's toil:
The stout wain-horse of encumbrance stripped
Shakes his enormous limbs with blundering speed.—

Rooks follow the slow, retarded plow
And brisk alight upon the worm . . .
Or sweeter grub . . .

And the mew
His treasury the main left far behind,
Settling timorous.—

The social group
Of elms and oaks that herd upon the lawn.—

The recent leaf

Of clover goes to sleep, and, white with dew,
Closes its tender, triple-fingered palm
Till morning dawns afresh.—

The maiden orchard's bough of snow.—

The clouds of April . . .

Superbly mountainous, before the breeze . . .

Upon the horizon's utmost skirt.—

The pea that waves

The healthy banner of its crimson flower

High in the liberal air.—

When Fitzgerald wrote—in Omar Khayyam—

“And that inverted bowl we call the sky
Whereunder crawling we live COOPED and die,
Lift not your hand to it for help, for it
As impotently MOVES as you or I”

Did he not have in mind the following lines of Hurdis?—

The mist involves

The total landscape, leaving to the eye

Small hemisphere and dark, a little world

Few yards encompassing, a cloudy COOP

That with the MOVER MOVES and COOPS him still.—

Hurdis's sayings:—

Who best deserves

Must feel the scourge of infinite abuse.—

I much admire we ever should complain

That life is sharp and painful when ourselves

Create the better half of all our woe.—

He who lives as in the face of Heaven

Shuns not the eye of Man.—

'T is independence consecrates the priest.—

Who has enough to be removed from need

Is rich.—

Where nothing is within,
Is it not plain without a diagram
That nothing will come out?

DOMESTIC VIGNETTES

Hurdis is waked early in the morning, by—

The faint tingling of the farmer's team.
How pleasant is it, as the break of day
Dawns, and the mountains lift their glowing heads
Into the golden sunbeam, to be roused
By the faint tingling of the farmer's team.—

At breakfast—especially if it be in a bitter season of the
year he observes—

THE MENDICANT ROBIN

The robin, a flattering mendicant
Made bold by want,
Asks alms the most indigent might afford,
A drop of water and a crumb of bread. . . .
Coming into the room . . .
Timid and sleek upon the floor he hops
His every feather clutched, all ear, all eye,
Picking each crumb diminutive
Which the last meal . . .
Dropped unperceived, and the religious broom
Unconscious left upon the woven floor.

In good weather outside, there is the cat on the sill—

PUSS ADORNS HERSELF

Pleased also [is the poet] if but puss upon the sill
Be seen adorning, with assiduous tongue,
Cleansing her taper shank, her dappled coat

And furry bosom, or with gentle paw
Laving her countenance and hindmost ear.

In the dooryard Hurdis notes—

THE RESPONSIVE COCK

The responsive cock
His kind attentions with transition quick
Duly performs . . . his open throated squall
That bids his wives and little ones beware
Oft as the falcon or the dove appears—
His chuckle of affection to his dames—
The shuffle of his wing, on this side now,
Now exercised on that, with low-bowed head,
And eye attentive to the fair he courts—
His croak of sage composure—his brisk call,
That summons to the housewife's scattered grain—
His sympathizing clamour o'er the nest.
His loud *what-what* of wonder—and his shrill
Far-sounding challenge to his distant peer.
His feathered concubine, meantime, aloud
Prates as she passes, or with silly pride
Cackles incontinent of new-laid eggs.

THE GOBBLER

Anon is heard
The turkey gobbling at the whistling boy
With hollow throat profound, as mid his dames
He struts with swelling plumes, erected far,
Low-curtsied wing and countenance inflamed.

Hurdis returns indoors to his morning's study—then—

The voluntary toils of morning past,
How pleasant to allow the studious mind

Convenient pause, and, every thought dismissed,
To ramble heedless o'er the bleating down
'Mid thousand thousand children of the flock
Yet from the dam unweaned, and flowery tufts
Ten thousand thousand of rich furze, erewhile
By the fast fleecy nibbler neatly trimmed,
And decorated now in robe superb,
Wrapping its branches in a blaze of gold,
As if the Deity himself were there.

Be this my Horeb, often as mine eye,
Fatigued with poring o'er the book divine,
Thirsts for the sweet amusements of the hill,
Thirsts to survey the clear unbillowy deep,
Which lifts the distant vessel into heaven,
And the green vale, that various in its hue,
Even to the pebbly verge of the blue flood
Its cattle-sprent enclosures neatly spreads. . . .
How sweet to cull from the meridian bank
Which underlies the wood-invested hill,
The recent, vigorous, protected flowers
Of cowslip, harebell, violet, or rose
Of prime peculiar, and with well-filled hand
To steal upon the nightingale unseen
Where'er he sings, invisible as wont,
And marvel at the wonder-working God
Who in the confines of his slender breast
Such sweet exuberance of music lodged. . . .

. . . to behold

Laughter and beauty upon every bank,
In every meadow, and on every hill.
Who can be grave and comment upon words
And give to dry research a cloudless May? . . .

. . . follow nature still,
Find something lovely in the meanest flower,

And fill thy hand, and satisfy thy heart
With all the graces of the field and grove.

BIRD OF THE SKY BAPTIZED

Bird of the sky baptized, the speckled lark. . . .
The eye that sees him with strained vision soars
To mark him quivering in the skies above:
Nor seldom, his ascension not observed,
Looks with vain scrutiny the dappled air,
Nor finds, invisible, the vocal spirit
Which fills with ravishment the deep of heaven,
And chants aerial melody unseen.

THE SLOW-COMING SPRING

The orchard floor, with sumptuous carpet spread,
Shames the slow branch that only buds alone.
The hedgerow feels the scandal of delay.

THE CATERPILLAR

The spinster caterpillar ties aloft
Fine as the gossamer his slender cord,
To his loved cradle the recovering elm
And playfully suspended, rocks and whirls,
And, ere his wings are granted, lives in air.

THE BIRDS BUILD NESTS

Think of Him whose all-protecting hand
Secretes the nestling with innumerable leaves
And with abundant foliage makes obscure.

NOW SENDS THE GARDEN ALL ITS GLORIES FORTH

Now sends the garden all its glories forth,
With many a nodding pyramid of flower,

Or pale or purple-hued, her varnished leaf
The lilac decks, Laburnum at her side
Weeps gold, sweet mourner! From behind uprears,
And tosses high in air her frothy globes,
Her unsubstantial roses, light as foam
Of new milk bubbling in the cowherd's pail,
The beauteous guelder shrub. Along the wall
Displays the fruit tree its superbest bloom . . .
O, lovely season! when in every bough
The recent equipage of beauty glows
Divine, and even in the bush appears
The manifested God!

THE SPENT ORCHARD'S BOUGH

The spent orchard's bough its bloom
Retains no longer. Ravished by the breeze,
Its drifted petal mounts and floats on high,
Or on the musing poet softly sheds
The grateful shower of spring's peculiar snow;
As thoughtful, he surveys and strives to paint
Earth green beneath, and ether blue above,
And the progressive cloud that creeps between,
Trailing its fleece, to niveous whiteness bleached,
'Cross the cerulean temple, the clear dome
Of heaven sublime, where sits enthroned on high
The worshipped Godhead, while all nations meet
And thinly people the vast aisle below . . .

(But it is not all a concord,—all that meets the poet's
eye.)

THE BOOR

. . . the awkward boor
Steering the plow, or goading the slow team
Along the mountainside, or partisan

In yon vile borough, of whose menial ways
Oft as he [The Poet] thinks he burns, from head to foot.

Nearer home, the poet perceives:

THE MOLE

Who—

. . . Again the miner plays, and heaves
With treble industry the mellow mound
Along the swarded vale . . . the passing cur
His persevering industry detects,
And stands with pricked-up ear and lifted paw
His labours watching. In the crumbled hill
He plunges sudden his impatient feet,
And far behind him showers the loose earth
Plucked hastily away. With nose deep-sunk
He snuffs inquisitive, but seizes not
The wily engineer, in time aware.

THE LINGERING SNAIL

(That reminds one of Gascoigne's snail crawling up the battlement where the hasty soldier got his skull cracked.)

Forth creeps the lingering snail; a silvery line
Meandering devious o'er the plastered wall
Marks his pituitous and slimy course.
With tardy shell and tender horn out-stretched
He seeks the far-off leaf.

"The gulls" are heard afar "crying like eager hounds remote," and there comes a change in the various day of English weather. Rain begins to fall, and the poet makes homeward, wet. And he sees the ducks—and comments on the contrast between the way the cock and the drake accept the downpour.

THE DUCK IN THE RAIN

. . . The Duck

With his green, glossy nape, assiduous oils
His shining beak, and spreads the thin defense
With nice precision o'er his thirsty plumes;
So falls the shower in vain, and he secure
Stalks in the deluge and defies it all,
The fine dew trickling from his sides unfelt,
Nor needs, like chanticleer and his vexed dames,
To hurry homeward when the flood descends,
To hang the head, or seek the shed forlorn;
Nothing impaired, with clean and ruddy leg
Through every plash he wades with chattering beak
Fishing the miry shallows as he goes;
Or strays at large upon the dewy mead
In quest of snail or slug, and winding worm,
Or launching from the shore his feathered fleet,
Pilots his dames along the flooded dike.

Ensconced by the hearth-fire in his cottage, with his sisters
—the poet comfortably enjoys the outside contrast of—

The nocturnal tempest
For entrance buffeting the sash in vain.
While the sullen shower, from the drenched eaves
Drips fast, and on the flooded pavement spans—

And here's the cat again—curled in warm domesticity—

THE SLUMBERING CAT

With folded feet inverted slumbers puss
The livelong evening on the quilted hearth,
Or warmer knee, caressed and often stroked,
Till gratitude awakes and lulls the ear
With drowsy murmurs of internal praise. . . .

Winter abroad brings in a different note—

THE OWL IN WINTER

. . . The loud-hooting owl
That loves the turbulent and frosty night
Perches aloft upon the rocking elm
And halloes to the moon. She, mounting slow,
Steers her wild voyage through a troubled sea
Of dissipated scud, apparent oft,
Oft intercepted by the billowy skirt
Of the fleet vapour, oft in part o'ercome,
Yet still victorious, be the storm how rude,
And nothing later at the port she seeks,
Retarded by the tide of adverse cloud.

THE BLACKBIRD'S DEATH IN WINTER

The sable bird melodious from the bough
No longer springs alert and clamorous,
Short flight and sudden with transparent wing
Along the ditch performing, fit by fit.
Shuddering he sits, in horrent coat out-swollen,
Despair has made him silent, and he falls
From his loved hawthorn, of its berry spoiled,
A wasted skeleton, shot through and through
By the near-aiming sportsman. Lovely bird,
So end thy sorrows and so ends thy song.
Never again in the still summer's eve,
Or early dawn of purple-vested morn
Shalt thou be heard, or solitary song
Whistle contented from the watery bough,
What time the sun flings o'er the dewy earth
An unexpected beam, fringing with flame
The cloud immense, whose shower-shedding folds

Have all day dwelt upon a deluged world.
No, thy sweet pipe is mute, it sings no more.

THE PEACEFUL, SERIOUS HOUR

'T is pleasant, in the peaceful, serious hour
To tread the silent sward that wraps the dead,
Once our companions in the cheerful walks
Of acceptable life, the same ere long
In the dark chambers of profound repose.
All have their kindred here, and I have mine.
Yes, my sweet Isabel,* and I have mine.
To die—what is it but to sleep and sleep,
Nor feel the weariness of dark delay
Through the long night of time, and nothing know
Of intervening centuries elapsed,
When thy sweet morn, Eternity, begins.

THE PLEASURES OF RETIREMENT

The pleasures of retirement. . . .
Leisure and freedom, and a mind at ease,
Books and a shady vale, and evening's walk,
Cheerful companions, and the sweet return
Of music ever serious. . . .
These are the sweetest luxuries of life,
Innocent luxuries that never cloy,
The best enjoyments to be found below:
And these are mine. Continue these, good God,
And give me health to use them as I please;
And be the rest or granted me or not
I'll pass through life with no unthankful heart,
And give a good report of human bliss,
To those who ask me, at the gates of Heaven.

• His deceased homely sister Catherine—in his verse named Isabel.

LET JUDAS ANSWER

Let Judas answer,—was the treasure sweet
When he betrayed his Master to his foe?
Why was it cast away? Why was he sad?
Why did he bitterly repent and die?
Alas, he found there was no peace on earth
When gratitude and honour were no more.

His love-songs consist of would-be-playful “efforts” full of charms, darts, hearts: they show none of the power of his nature-verse.

But here is one not quite so bad:

IN MY BOSOM, CONTENTMENT

In my bosom contentment shall reign,
And despair shall torment me no more,
I have seen my loved fair one again,
She came with a smile to my door.
I have seen her, though transient her stay,
Though time would not loiter and wait;
The shower has not yet washed away
The print of her foot at my gate.



JOHN CLARE

1793-1864

"LABOURER-POET."

When a very child John Clare set out over hedge and through field, one day, to find the spot where heaven and earth met. . . .

His father's father was a wild vagabond, a truculent fiddler by the name of Parker, who, having footed it all over Europe, careless of bloodshed and uproar, to the tune of his violin,—finally drifted into Helpstone, a Northamptonshire village. There he had the effrontery to set up as schoolmaster . . . outside school hours he found leisure to seduce and abandon a poor minister's daughter . . . their illegitimate child, John Clare,—was father of the poet.

John Clare, Sr., was a labourer; he had a family of seven of which John Clare, the poet, was one . . . the boy was born, small and frail, "into a heritage of handicaps." . . .

Early he came into contact with poetry. His father and his dropsical mother both recited the ballads and rough rhymes current in their countryside. And there was the usual, eerie old woman, Granny Bains, an ancient, weather-grained cowherd, who recited stories to the young poet and sang him ditties.

Clare worked as gooseherd and shepherd, becoming a wage-earner at seven. He was boy-of-all-work at an inn . . . wandering afield whenever he could, jotting down rhymes on saved scraps of paper, that hummed of themselves in his brain. He saved from his scant wages to buy himself a copy of Thompson's "Seasons."

Stone cutter, cobbler, gardener's apprentice—the head gardener under whom Clare worked was a drunkard, and was determined to convert into a drink-addict whoever worked under him. He succeeded with Clare. The delicate nervous lad, already by nature too excitable for additional stimulation, consorted with fellow drunkards in inns . . . slept in hedges and ditches . . . ran away from his apprenticeship in vain, to escape the habit that was deep in him.

Neighbours called Clare crazy, or accused him of "Black Magic," seeing him mooning about the fields,—and because of his strange timidity and shyness.

His ignorant mother burnt his mss. that she came upon, using it to start fires with . . . the local gentry laughed at him, when he sought their patronage.

Clare experienced the usual love-affairs of the country—"walked out" with various girls . . . his first girl, Mary Joyce, whom he loved, at the age of sixteen, he never forgot. Later, when he was incarcerated in an asylum, he lived a dream-marriage with her . . . and dream-children were begotten to whom he gave names, assured of their reality.

At twenty-four Clare went through the ceremony of an actual marriage, with a labourer's daughter, Martha Turner . . . he failed in having his poems published . . . was discharged for slackness, from his job at the lime kiln . . . went on the poor-rates . . . and meanwhile there was born to him and his wife, in their extreme poverty, one child after another.

Taylor of London printed a volume of his poems . . . the country gentry, hitherto ignoring him, turned in a rush of patronage in his direction.

The poor chap set out for London, innocently clad in a labourer's smock, and hob-nail-booted . . . he was re-

ceived by the City snobs as a nine days' wonder,—and sent to eat with the servants in the kitchen.

Shaking and trembling in every limb with sensitive hurt, he discovered he was not rightly garbed . . . and his Publisher Taylor, at one place, gave him his overcoat to conceal his workingman's clothes. But his simplicity appealed to Coleridge, Lamb, and De Quincey, and received no hurt of them.

Clare's second volume fell flat. The old novelty was gone. The wits and fashionables were no longer interested in him.

On the birth of his seventh child Clare rushed out into the fields, and was found by his eldest daughter, who followed him, unconscious in a ditch. He secretly starved himself to support mother, wife, and children.

He tramped to London again, to escape treats and boozing at "The Blue Bell," the local inn . . . carrying his possessions over his shoulder in a handkerchief, on the end of a stick, like the sailor in the old woodcut.

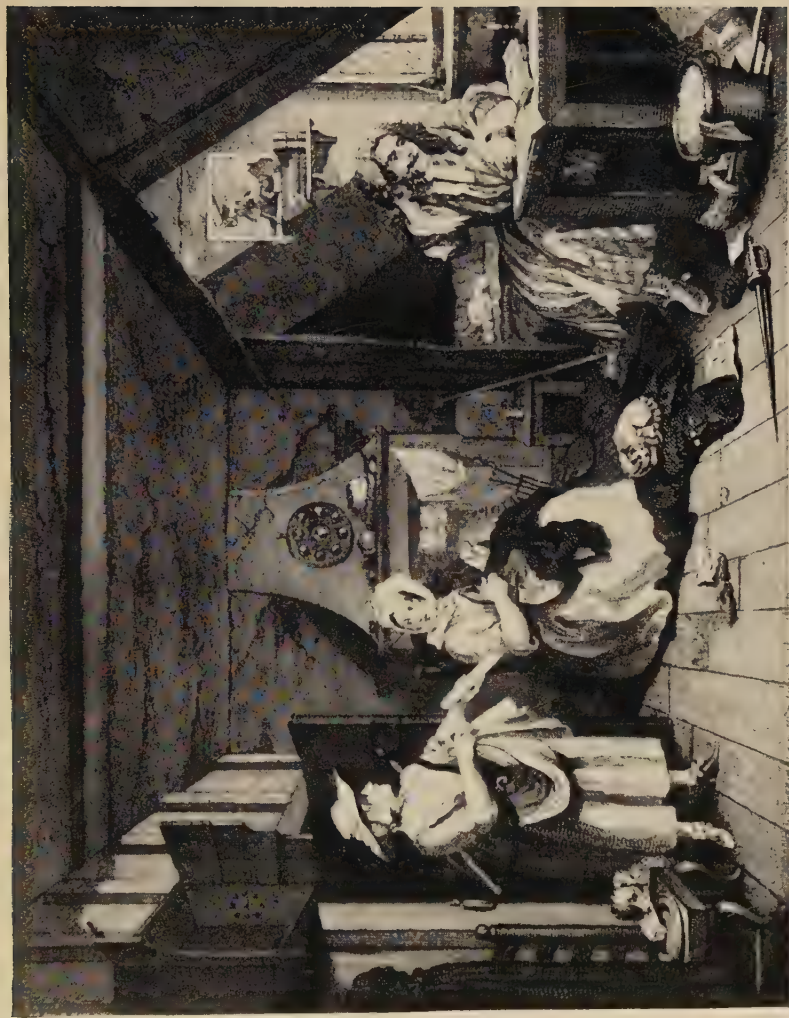
He was snubbed, and returned home heart-broken.

He peddled his own poetry about the country . . . for exercise, and to escape a nervous break-down.

Earl Fitzwilliams built him a cottage at Northborough, but he ran into difficulty when he sought work among strangers. He fell homesick and hurried back to his former but habitual hovel . . . the Earl did not understand, and grew indignant at Clare for his "ingratitude."

When "The Rural Muse" was printed, Professor Wilson, who wrote "Noctes Ambrosianæ," indignantly took up cudgels for the labourer-poet.

Clare, suffering under a nervous break-down, roamed half-crazed among the flowers of spring in the fields and woods he loved, seeking for healing. . . .



(From an engraving by Hogarth)

THE DISTRESSED POET

They sent him off to a private asylum near Epping Forest . . . one day he showed up, having escaped; having walked back, his feet bloodied; his food on the way—grass.

Though his madness was nothing but harmless ecstasy, he was now sent to the Northamptonshire General Lunatic Asylum. There he lingered out the twenty-two remaining years of his life, neglected of all . . . but, for a wonder, the asylum heads showed decency to him . . . put him in a private ward, with the best patients . . . and he was allowed books and much freedom . . . dreaming himself a famous poet, and happily married to his first sweetheart, with his own dream-children about him; duplicating a real life of success in every detail.

On the poet's death Earl Fitzwilliams was approached with a project for burial funds; still resentful, he asked whether a pauper funeral were not enough!

John Clare was a familiar friend of every particular of animate and inanimate nature . . . he loved the birds' eggs in the nests, and let them be . . . nor did he not see the tiny lichens on the stones . . . he enumerated flowers and birds in his verse, as one who did not copy them from other poets, but who lived with them on family terms . . . all his intimate expressions of rhythmic feeling and rapport with natural life were lovely and clear as a brook running over pebbles, in themselves; but they were not quite enough built up into a body of coherent and uniform poem-structure . . . he rambled on and on when he should have brought the poem to an end.

At this late day, Clare deserves the increase in fame that is coming to him.

Examples of fresh-seeing and accurate natural observation:

The sun, a homeless ranger,
Pursues alone his naked way.—

The spreading goose grass, trailing all abroad
In leaves of silver-green about the road.—

The bee that most divinely sips
With every flower saves golden buttercups.—

He spoke properly of the nightingale as merry, wooing the night's dull hours, instead of reading the conventional sadness into her song.

Clare—a meagre combination of the spirits of Keats and Blake; he bore a frayed, mad look of upward ecstasy in his eyes.

Keats wrote, as his own epitaph—"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Clare wrote an equally despondent one—"Here rest the Hopes and Ashes of John Clare."

Clare's one saying:

True Poesy owns a haunted mind.

THE DEITY

Omnipotent Eternal!—known Unknown!
The world whose footstool is, the heaven whose throne!
Who is it spreads this glory all around
Star-studded skies, and flower-bewildered ground?
Who is it speaks these wonders, and they be?
Who is it, dread Omnipotent, but thee!
Thou on the sun didst breathe thy power's desire
And instant kindled his eternal fire;
Thou badest the unpillared skies their arch expand—
Thy breath is underneath them, and they stand;
Thou badest the seas in tides to rise and fall,
And earth to swell triumphant over all.

Thy mercy, co-eternal with thy skill,
Saw all was good, and bids it flourish still!

TO NAPOLEON

The heroes of the present and the past
Were puny, vague, and nothingness to thee:
Thou didst a span grasp mighty to the last,
And strain for glory when thy die was cast.
That little island, on the Atlantic sea,
Was but a dust-spot on thy lake; thy mind
Swept space as shoreless as eternity.
Thy giant powers outstript this gaudy age
Of heroes; and, as looking at the sun,
So gazing on thy greatness, made men blind
To merits, that had adoration won
In olden times. The world was on thy page
Of victories but a comma. Fame could find
No parallel thy greatness to presage.

WHEN LOVERS PART

When lovers part the longest mile
Leaves hope of some returning:
Though mine 's close by, no hopes the while
Within my heart are burning.
One hour would bring me to her door;
Yet, sad and lonely-hearted,
If seas between us both should roar,
We were not further parted. . . .
Though I could reach her with my hand,
Ere sun the earth goes under,
Her heart from mine—the sea and land
Are not more wide asunder.
The wind and clouds, now here, now there,
Hold no such strange dominion

As woman's cold, perverted will,
And soon estranged opinion.

THE DAISY'S ETERNITY

The daisy lives, and strikes its little root
Into the lap of time: centuries may come,
And pass away into the silent tomb,
And still the child, hid in the womb of time,
Shall smile and pluck them, when this simple rhyme
Shall be forgotten, like a churchyard stone,
Or, lingering, lie unnoticed and unknown. . . .
Aye, still the child, with pleasure in his eye,
Shall cry "The Daisy!" a familiar cry—
And run to pluck it, in the selfsame state
As when Time found it, in his infant date;
And, like a child himself, when all was new,
Might smile with wonder, and take notice too.

EMONSDALE'S HEATH

In thy wild garb of other times
I find thee lingering still;
Furze o'er each lazy summit climbs,
At Nature's easy will. . . .
Grasses that never knew a scythe
Wave all the summer long;
And wild weed blossoms waken blithe
That ploughmen never wrong. . . .
Creation's steps one wandering meets
Untouched by those of man:
Things seem the same in such retreats
As when the world began.



GEORGE DARLEY

1795-1846

DARLEY's father and mother voyaged to America when he was a child, leaving him behind, in Ireland, in the care of his grandfather.

Darley grew up to be a shy, stammering boy, and his habit of stammering increased with the years, and became his chief impediment in life; he again and again referred to it as "the mask" he wore—"that hideous mask." . . .

When he came to London to embark on a literary career, it was painful to him to be in company because of his impediment of speech, and it was embarrassing to the people he was with . . . he quickly became a "hermit in the midst of London." At times the terror of his "mask" would utterly overcome him at the prospect of a social engagement, and he would write instead of visiting.

When he felt at ease with a few friends—or when he forgot himself in declaiming from the Elizabethan dramatists, he was a different being . . . then his words flowed easily . . . his eyes burned . . . a far-away earnestness illumined his face . . . his very thoughts showed transparent there.

Chronic headache added to his ills. "A tertian headache consumes more of my life than sleep does." He spent much of his "headachey life" in France and Italy, moving about in search of health he never found . . . from his travels he wrote back insipid letters to three nieces of

his, with mid-Victorian, mushy "sportiveness" signing himself "Fadladeen."

Never giving himself to "the raw violence of alcohol," he was "a mere tea drinker." Wordsworth was "a mere tea drinker" too . . . whose draughts of strong tea tore along his nerves with all the violence, and without the glorious exhilaration, of wine and brandy.

Bad models ruined Darley's verse: the "Endymion" of Keats, the worst parts of Shakespeare, and of the lesser Elizabethan dramatists.

With Taylor and Beddoes he ranked among the New Elizabethans and indited closet dramas whose phraseology was stale and faded like the vilest libretto-translations hawked about at the Opera. His sublimest flights are marred by grotesque and ridiculous expressions and examples of bad taste—for instance—"pouting flower." He may, as he averred, have fed on "the ogre milk of the rude old dramatists"—but what he gives us is too often whey.

His haphazard imagination plunges headlong into mad fantasy, unreined and undirected. When he does hit it off, he breaks like lightning into breathless and unexpected bursts of richest beauty.

It was logical that Darley's poetry should not have been successful.

When Tennyson spoke his admiration and asked Darley why he had not collected his poems in a volume, Darley replied, "The public don't care for them, and I can't afford to lose by them." Whereupon Tennyson offered to defray the necessary expense himself.

Darley was quite mawkish and treacly about women . . . got a tremendous erotic "kick" from mere contemplation of virginity and feminine purity.

In person Darley was tall, slight, and graceful; his mind

and body seemed to be of one thought as he moved agilely about. His features were well-cut, and his pale, melancholy face distinctly handsome. He had wavy brown hair till he became a bald-pate. . . .

He disliked smutty stories and left the table with the ladies to avoid hearing them.

He had the insolent habit of squirting vinegar through the quill of a toothpick.

In his poetry he failed; he made a success of his books on mathematics. His Algebra went through three, his Geometry through five, editions.

He was never a day without pique at his lack of fame, and evidenced this in his sayings—"the frozen admiration of friends," "the spirit cannot soar without praise," and "a murder is done every night upon genius by neglect and scorn" . . . himself not the least of murderers—for as dramatic critic, first on the *London Magazine*,—which Keats' publishers, Taylor and HESSY ran,—then on the *Athenæum*, in savage truculence he took out his own dramatic and literary failure on others; with few exceptions—one of them being Thomas Lovell Beddoes.

Darley died of a general decline.

Darley's sayings:—

Genius is exalted feeling.—

The beating heart,

Ever a victim and a child.—

Woman makes Nimrods of us all.

HER PRESENCE IMMINENT

Mid roaring brooks and dark moss-vales

Where speechless thought abides,

Still her sweet spirit dwells,

That knew no world besides.

Her form the woodland still retains—
Wound but a creeping flower,
Her very life-blood stains
Thee in a falling shower.

Touch but the stream, drink but the air,
Her cheek, her breath is known—
Ravish that red rose there,
And she is all thy own.

THE CLIMBER ON THE HEIGHTS

Over the hills and uplands high
Hurry me, Nymphs, O, hurry me!
Where green earth from azure sky
Seems but a step to be. . . .
Come where high Olympus nods,
Groundsill to the hall of Gods! . . .
Hurry me, Nymphs, O, hurry me
Far above the grovelling sea,
Which, with blind weakness and base roar,
Casting his white age on the shore,
Wallows along that slimy floor;
With his wide-spread webbed hands
Seeking to climb the level sands,
But rejected still to rave
Alive in his uncovered grave.

GARMENTS ARE ONLY GOOD

Garments are only good to inspire
Warmer, wantoner desire;
For those beauties make more riot
In our hearts, themselves at quiet
Under veils and vapoury lawns
Through which their moon-cold lustre dawns,

And might perchance if full revealed
Seem less wondrous than concealed,
Greater defeat of virtue made
When Love shoots from an ambushade,
Than with naked front and fair.
Who the loose Grace in flowing hair
Hath ever sought with so much care,
As the crape-enshrouded nun
Scarce warmed by touches of the sun?

HUNDRED-GATED CITY, THOU
Hundred-gated City! thou
With gryphoned porch and avenue
For denizen'd giants, serve they now
But to let one poor mortal through?
Wide those streaming gates of war
Ran once with many a conqueror. . . .
Where is now the loud acclaim?
Where the trample and the roll,
Shaking staid earth like a mole?
Sunk to a rush's sigh!—Farewell,
Thou bleached wilderness o'erblown
By treeless winds, unscythable
Sandbanks, with peeping rocks bestrown
That for thy barrenness seem'st to be
The bed of some retreated sea!
City of Apis, shrine and throne,
Fare thee well! dispeopled sheer
Of thy mighty millions, here
Giant thing inhabits none,
But vast desolation! . . .
Helméd high within the gloom,
Thy pillaring statues sit sublime,
Taking, each side, colossal room

On granite thrones no king might climb,
And keeping halléd state till Doom,
Co-templar Deities with Time.
Or before thy porch profound
By the choked river's antique roll,
From their seats, dry fathoms drowned,
Peering mildly over ground,
Head-free, along the desert shoal,
If not with form discumbered whole,
Looking blank on, as they did see
Far o'er this little earthy knoll
Into thy depths, Infinity.

DREAMS OF FLYING

. . . I have often dreamed
Of gliding by long leaps o'er the green ground
In breathless ecstasy: through plushy lanes,
Tree-sided; and down sloping esplanades
Battening in the sunlight; along alleys dim,
High-terraced rivers, and wild meadow-lands,
Bending my easy way; by will alone,
And inward heaving, raised, I seem to flee,
With pleasant dread of touching the near grass
That brushes at my feet.

THOU ART THE QUEEN OF FLOWERS

Thou art the Queen of Flowers, and lov'st to tend
Thy beauteous subjects. Thou dost spread thy wing;
Between the driving raindrop and the rose,
Sheltering it at thy cost. I 've seen thee stand
Drowning amid the fields to save a daisy,
And with warm kisses keep its sweet life in.

HAVE YOU NOT OFT, IN THE STILL WIND

Have you not oft, in the still wind,
Heard silvan notes of a strange kind,
That rose one moment, and then fell
Swooning away like a far knell?
Listen!—that wave of perfume broke
Into sea-music as I spoke,
Fainter than that which seems to roar
On the moon's silver-sanded shore,
When through the silence of the night
Is heard the ebb and flow of light,
O shut the eye and ope the ear!
Do you not hear, or think you hear
A wide hush o'er the woodland pass
Like distant waving fields of grass?

LAST NIGHT

I sat with one I love last night,
She sang to me an olden strain;
Of former times it woke delight,
 Last night—but pain.

Last night we saw the stars arise,
But clouds soon dimmed the ether blue:
And when we sought each other's eyes
 Tears dimmed them too!

We paced along our favourite walk
But paced in silence broken-hearted:
Of old we used to smile and talk.
 Last night—we parted.

ROBIN'S CROSS

A little cross,
To tell my loss;
A little bed
To rest my head;
A little tear is all I crave
Under my very little grave.

I strew thy bed
Who loved thy lays;
The tear I shed,
The cross I raise,
With nothing more upon it than—
Here lies the Little Friend of Man!



HARTLEY TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1796-1848

ON THE receipt of news of his son Hartley's birth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the author of "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel," penned three sonnets in celebration of the event: the first one entitled "On receiving a letter informing me of the birth of a son," the second, "Composed on a journey homeward; the author having received intelligence of the birth of a son," the third, "To a friend who asked, how I felt when the nurse first presented my infant to me." All three were efforts replete with turgid moralizings and the usual pious ejaculations.

In the first sonnet Coleridge prayerfully asked of the deity, for the new-born child—

"That thy o'ershadowing spirit may descend,
And he be born again, a child of God."

If God's spirit found any opportunity the briefest to "overshadow" the child's soul, it was the fault neither of the earthly father, nor of Wordsworth and others of the Lake School; who, with their own spirits, quite overshadowed and weighed down the boy from his cradle . . . at the age of four they had led him deep into metaphysical and philosophical disquisitions, like a full-grown man,—not only thwarting his natural childhood, but destroying his further career.

"I had a very long conversation with Hartley about Life, Reality, Pictures, and Thinking, this evening," says the pontific father, in a letter. . . .

And if Coleridge wrote sonnets to his son, and kept on writing about him and to him in his other verse—the solemn, prating Wordsworth also could not keep his hands of rhyme off the lad—

“Nature will either end thee quite,
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb’s heart among the full-grown flocks.”

Nature preserved for him “a young lamb’s heart among the full-grown flocks,” but she did not lengthen out his “season of delight,” nor did she bring a speedy end to the torture of his life . . . for it was one of the saddest of all the lives of the English Poets; Hartley Coleridge stated of himself—“I am a beggar, a bankrupt in estate, in love . . . in self-esteem.” And “If I were to do so, I could make a list of more sorrows than any man living.”

Early he instinctively sought escape from the oppressive minds and exemplars of his literary and pseudo-philosophic elders, by creating for himself a dream-world into which he might retire—a world of his utter own—the famous island-continent of “Ejuxria.” He invented for this imaginary kingdom a history, and a geography, making it a complete analogon to the world of fact.

To remove himself still more securely into a world where his Father and Wordsworth and Southey could not obtrude and bear down on his brain,—he retreated further into his imagination and shaped other dream-nations “continental and insular, each with its separate history, civil, ecclesiastical, and literary, its forms of religion and government, and specific national character.”

“He was, I am persuaded,” testifies his brother Derwent, “utterly unconscious of invention; I have every reason to believe he continued the habit mentally . . . after he left

school . . . in this and in many other ways, CONTINUING
A CHILD. . . .

"One day, when walking very pensively, I asked him what ailed him. He said 'my people are too fond of war, and I have just made an eloquent speech in my senate, which has not made any impression on them, and to war they will go.'"

Incidentally, Hartley's "Ejuxria" was not half as absurd as the dream Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth conceived, of their "Pantisocracy," an ideal commonwealth to be founded by them in Pennsylvania "on the banks of the Susquehanna," where human relationships were to leap into an immediate state of perfectibility. At least Hartley Coleridge's dream-kingdom did not involve such an impossible right-about-face for the human breed. . . .

His mind full of philosophic disquisitions, the boy never played with other children, except when holding them thrall'd by tales of his own invention.

All other children—especially the bigger boys—were his torturing and teasing enemies. . . .

When grown to full manhood he confessed—

"I have an instinctive horror of big boys. When I am at all unwell, they are always at me in my dreams,—hooting, pelting, spitting at me, stopping my ways, setting all sorts of hideous, scornful faces at me, oppressing me with indescribable horrors to which waking life has no parallel."

He was possessed by strange infirmities of will, was this child-man! and "his sensibility was so intense, he could not open a letter without trembling." He was subject to paroxysms of rage during which he would bite his arm or finger violently. . . .

The elder Coleridge was unable to support him at Oxford, where Southey obtained him a scholarship and support.

The young poet won great repute as a wonderful talker at the "wine-parties" of the students.

But, when overcome by wine—which was as much a poison to him as it proved to be to Poe—he was ever marked in conduct by an easy good-breeding, and his converse was never touched with the least shade of commonness or vulgarity. . . .

It was while at college that he began to hear "an audible, sensuous voice foreboding evil" to him.

Wine and brandy were his one vice and downfall . . . he never knew women sexually, though he longed sadly and forlornly for love and marriage. . . .

Hartley Coleridge was a passionate-talking little fellow with a mane of hair soon whitened; he was under five feet . . . he danced about exuberantly, pathetically trying to win the hearts of women . . . this prancing goblin, his shock of white hair swinging, himself still crushed under the towering fame and priggish advice of his elders. . . .

"Late in the evening I saw such a figure as I had never seen before," a literary lady writes, of Hartley Coleridge—"gliding noiselessly into the bright drawing room,—small, dressed in black, with thick raven hair (soon afterward turned snow-white) almost on his shoulder . . . in his manner of approaching the lady of the house, his stiff, slow, silent bow, a sort of distressed shyness in his countenance, and a deprecatory politeness, like that of olden time . . . his humourous air of simplicity, his slow, measured words and general eccentricity of manner, was at first a signal for merriment." . . .

Deprived of his fellowship at Oxford for his drinking, and being given a sum of two hundred pounds as a solace for his dismissal, the poet came to London, to enter upon a writing career. There he was well taken care of by friends, but failed as a literary man. . . .

Back to the Lake Country, he took up teaching . . . again failed . . . considered taking holy orders . . . gave up that idea. . . .

Concerning his teaching in the boys' school, one of his pupils subsequently wrote—

"There was a sort of autumnal ripeness and brightness about him . . . out of school he never mixed with the boys, but was sometimes seen, to their astonishment, running along the fields with his arms outstretched and talking to himself,—he had no pet scholars except one, who he said ought to have been a girl. He told me that was the only boy he ever loved, though he always loved little girls."

An annuity came his way. He gave up teaching and became a solitary student, and a vigorous brandy-drinker at the local inns . . . roaming abroad, drunk with either poetic ecstasy or brandy:

"Thousands retain the image of the man himself as he was seen out of doors, standing immersed in thought or strolling onwards, now slow, now fast, with gusty and irregular movement along the lanes and roads of his own and adjoining vales . . . as I have before intimated, his purposeless wanderings had been sometimes pursued till he LOST THE POWER TO RETURN (an attempt to escape from his self-limitations and his thwarted life?), guided forward by feelings, the nature and intensity of which may rather be guessed than known, he seemed to fly the sight of his own home and the presence of friends, whose very love was a constraint, till he was found . . . perhaps in some remote vale. He could not fall among strangers. Go where he would, where he might, he was treated with affectionate respect. Love followed him like his shadow."

He appeared at all rustic festivities, at sheepshearings, weddings, christenings,—he would sit in a cottage, nursing an infant by the hour. . . .

He entered into metaphysical disquisitions with the Cumberland peasants, and once he delivered what might be called a historical lecture to a party of farmers, when he joined them for shelter from the rain under an ingle-nook. . . . "Aye, Mr. Coleridge talks fine," they averred, adding they "would go through fire and water for Mr. Coleridge."

Absent-minded to a prodigious extent, "one hour was the same as twenty-four." Once he stood stock-still in the centre aisle of a church during services, till a friend came and moved him to a seat. . . .

Long after his father's death, his continual expression when he did anything, was—"What would my father think of this?" and "I have forgotten myself too often," he once declared, "but I have never forgotten my father."

Climbing for books on a bookshelf, on a chair with a loose seat, he fell through it, exclaiming, "Oh! how I wish my father could but see me: he used to say that I could get through nothing. But, at all events, I am clean through this chair." . . .

Over the mantelpiece of his study hung "a cocked hat with a feather and sword," relics of the father's brief military experience . . . other relics of the elder Coleridge were everywhere at hand. . . .

Hartley Coleridge died, leaving pages and pages of notes, and copious marginalia in books he had read . . . but no effective work beyond his two volumes of poems. He was preëminently a sonneteer. . . .

"He composed with an occasional flourish of his pen in the air, and stamped his foot to beat out the time of his verse . . . he shouted over a fine line or epithet when it occurred." . . .

The aged, venerable Wordsworth ghoulishly saw his body laid away.

His soul, I trust, is, to quote his own verse, now happy
and at rest

In the land where love

Immortal and unstained, is all in all.—

I also trust that Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge Sr.
are, at best, located in a far other portion of that same para-
dise, where they can no longer outweigh and overshadow
and meddle with, the white-haired goblin's spirit!

I NEED A CLEANSING CHANGE

I need a cleansing change within,

My life must once again begin;

New hope, new love, and youth renewed,

And more than human fortitude. . . .

Ah, why did fabling poets tell

That Lethe only flows in hell?

It is the only fount of bliss

That springs in the waste wilderness. . . .

Not once a year, but now and ever

It is the blest undying river,

That descending from the skies,

Waters earthly paradise.

THE FUNERAL OF AN AGED WOMAN

Upon my way I met a long, slow train

Of men and carts, so silent that the rain

Through the still air distilled, amid the hush

Was softly heard. More audible the gush

Of falling waters in their desperate leap,

And melancholy bleat of draggled sheep;

And moaning wheels. With solemn pace they trod

To lay beneath the churchyard's billowy sod

A woman, that had borne the woes, and fears,

And hopes of life, for nigh a hundred years—
That was a little baby in a frock,
Ere the wild bird had planted in the rock
Yon tree,—a wonder how its roots are fed,
That decks the autumn with its berries red!
She has outlived her loves. The world hath changed
Since she was young. The nimble feet that ranged
The lofty pastures—upward pushed the plow—
Straight in the coffin they point upward now!

LONG TIME A CHILD

Long time a child, and still a child, when years
Had painted manhood on my cheeks, Was I,—
For yet I lived like one not born to die;
A thriftless prodigal of smiles and tears,
No hope I needed, and I knew no fears.
But sleep, though sweet, is only sleep, and waking,
I waked to sleep no more, at once o'ertaking
The vanguard of my age, with all arrears
Of duty on my back. Nor child, nor man,
Nor youth, nor sage, I find my head is grey,
For I have lost the race I never ran:
A rathe December blights my lagging May;
And still I am a child, though I be old,
Time is my debtor for my years untold.

THE MAN WHOSE LADY-LOVE IS VIRGIN TRUTH

The Man, whose lady-love is virgin Truth,
Must woo a lady that is hard to win:
She smiles not on the wild and wordy din
Of all-confiding, all-protesting Youth;
The Sceptic's apathy, the garb uncouth,
And Cynic sneer of o'er-experienced Sin,

The Serpent, writhing in its out-worn skin,
Craving again to flesh its sated tooth,
She quite abhors. She is not fond, nor coy—
Self-seeking love, and self-appraising scorn,
She knows not. She hath utterly forsworn
Her worldly dower of wealth, and pride, and joy—
Her very beauty none but they discover,
Who for herself, not for her beauty, love her.

NOT IN VAIN

Let me not deem that I was made in vain,
Or that my being was an accident,
Which Fate, in working its sublime intent,
Not wished to be, to hinder would not deign.
Each drop uncouneted in a storm of rain
Hath its own mission, and is duly spent
'Mid myriad dimples on the shipless main.
The very shadow of an insect's wing,
For which the violet cared not while it stayed,
Yet felt the lighter for its vanishing,
Proved that the sun was shining by its shade:
Then can a drop of the eternal spring,
Shadow of living lights, in vain be made?



ROBERT POLLOK

1798-1827

THE GRAVE

OF

ROBERT POLLOK, A. M.

AUTHOR OF

“THE COURSE OF TIME”

HIS IMMORTAL POEM

IS HIS

MONUMENT

ERECTED BY ADMIRERS OF HIS GENIUS

IN THE seashore churchyard of Millbrook that lies on the coast two miles from Southampton, the above is what the casual stroller may read, inscribed on an obelisk of Peter-head granite.

“On Friday the twenty-first of September, 1827, all that was mortal of the author of ‘The Course of Time’ was carried to its burial by a few invited friends. Perhaps the paucity of mortal attendants was more than overbalanced by legions of angels who were present.” . . .

“The Court of Time” is a book that may still be picked up second-handed on the street-stalls of bookstores. It was once immensely popular both in England and in America,

and—spiritual food for the sternly pious who believed unflinchingly in a just God whose love for man was rooted in hell-fire,—it went through many editions.

Robert Pollok was a lusty Scot of the raven-haired type. His father was a leasehold farmer at Moorhouse, and there were six other sons in the family; Robert and David gave up their healthful and sturdy labour a-field for severe disciplined studies that pointed toward the goal of the ministry.

There was the long struggle of the poor student for both of them—at the University of Glasgow; and Robert succumbed to the unnatural rigours of the scholastic life . . . hours of poring far into the weary night, over the classics. Above all he succumbed to lack of that open-air exercise on his father's farm to which his frame had been habituated.

Before being ultimately stricken down with the disease of consumption, he had turned poetry-wards.

It was not until he came upon a passage in Byron, descriptive of the end of the world, that he hit upon the writing of his "Course of Time." In rebuttal of Byron's "atheism" he composed a passage in blank verse expressive of the Last Day in the accepted religious sense. From this passage grew his small epic, "The Course of Time," that described, from the retrospect of eternity—

The world at dawn, at midday, and decline;
Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned,
And God's eternal government approved.—

This youthful Milton-on-one-reed was rushed on his way to Italy by friends. But the disease had already advanced too far, and he was hurried, in the company of his married sister, from London, to a cottage in the south of England, in the vicinity of Southampton,—where he died.

umes, used neither wax, moss, nor wire . . . she employed no material but paper, which she herself, from her knowledge of chemistry, was enabled to dye of all hues, and in every shade of each; no implement but her scissors, not once her pencil; yet never did painting present a more exact representation of flowers of every colour, size, and cultivation, from simple hedge and field-flower, to the most complicated foliage that Horticulture has multiplied . . . this lady . . . began . . . her astonishing, self-invented work at the age of seventy-four," so on and on . . . the cotton spinning machine . . . the invention of the diving bell . . . the first balloon . . . the steam engine . . . gunpowder—in addressing the gnomes the Botanic Muse tells them—

You taught mysterious BACON to explore
Metallic veins, and part the dross from ore. . . .
Through wiry nets the black diffusion strain,
And close an airy ocean in a grain.—

Nothing is deemed alien to poetry by Dr. Darwin's Muse—

THE STEAM ENGINE

(With a careful footnote that Savery, not Watts, was the true discoverer of steam; Watts being the improver of the discovery.)

Nymphs! You erewhile on simmering cauldrons played,
And called delighted SAVERY to your aid;
Bade round the youth explosive STEAM aspire
In gathering clouds, and winged the wave with fire;
Bade with cold streams the quick expansive stop,
And sunk the immense of vapour to a drop—
Pressed by the ponderous air the Piston falls
Resistless, sliding through its iron walls;
Quick moves the balanced beam, of giant-birth,
Wiolds his large limbs, and nodding shakes the earth. . . .

(Then the Botanic Goddess herself hymns STEAM prophetically)

Soon shall thy arm, unconquered STEAM! afar
Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car;
Or on wide-waving wings expanded bear
The flying chariot through the fields of air.
Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,
Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move;
Or warrior-bands alarm the gaping crowd,
And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud.

It is noteworthy that Erasmus Darwin not only preceded Walt Whitman in singing the poetry of the life of the day—however inadequately—but that he also foreran his famous grandson in previously formulating his doctrines of evolution; in associating musical notation with the poetic meters, before Lanier; and in forecasting the modern “Colour-organ”; for he suggested, in his prose dialogues on poetry, such an instrument, from observing “the curious coincidence in the mathematical relationship between the seven primary colours and the seven notes of the gamut.” . . .

“An organ might be made” by which ‘colour-music’ could be given “by means of Mr. Organd’s lamps,—a strong light passing through coloured glasses, and falling on a defined part of a wall, with movable blinds before them, which might communicate with the keys of a harpsichord, thus producing at the same time visible and invisible music.”

THE CREATION (OR SCIENCE AND GENESIS COMBINED)

LET THERE BE LIGHT! proclaimed the ALMIGHTY LORD,
Astonished Chaos heard the potent word;—
Through all his realms the kindling ether runs,

And such reward the Devil had as long
As the decrees eternal gave him space
To work.

AN EVE OF AUTUMN'S HOLIEST MOOD

It was an eve of Autumn's holiest mood;
The cornfields, bathed in Cynthia's silver light,
Stood ready for the reaper's gathering hand;
And all the winds slept soundly; nature seemed,
In silent contemplation, to adore
Its Maker: now and then an aged leaf
Fell from its fellows, rustling to the ground;
And, as it fell, bade man think on his end.
On vale and lake, on wood and mountain high,
With pensive wing outspread, sat heavenly thought,
Conversing with itself: Vesper looked forth,
From out her western hermitage, and smiled;
And up the east unclouded rode the Moon
With all her stars, gazing on earth intense,
As if she saw some wonder walking there.

FOUR TREES I PASS NOT BY

—Four trees I pass not by,
Which o'er our house their evening shadows threw:—
Three ash, and one of elm: tall trees they were,
And old; and had been old a century
Before my day: none living could say aught
About their youth; but they were goodly trees:
And oft I wondered, as I sat and thought
Beneath their summer shade, or in the night
Of winter, heard the spirits of the wind
Growling among their boughs—how they had grown
So high, in such a rough, tempestuous place:

And when a hapless branch, torn by the blast,
Fell down, I mourned, as if a friend had fallen.

INVITATION

In the woodlands Love is singing,
Health salutes the rosy day,
Hill and dale with joy are ringing,
Rise, my love, and come away!
Winter, with his snowy head,
To his icy den has fled. . . .
And gay Spring, in gown of green,
Frisking o'er the lawn is seen—
Frisking o'er the lawn and mountain,
Bathing in the silver fountain,
Singing in the arboured shade,
And weeping tears of joy on every blade.
With her forth the Graces sally,
Painting flowers with nature's skill;
Lilies dwelling in the valley,
Daisies shining on the hill. . . .
In the woodlands love is singing,
Health salutes the rosy day,
Hill and dale with joy are ringing,
Rise, my love, and come away!



THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES

1803-1849

ALSO OF the school of the closet-drama. One, too, who "fed on the ogre milk of the rude, old dramatists," decocting therefrom, instead of whey, a powerful brew of bitter, black hemlock and potent drugs whose original plants struck their roots around the bones and skulls of century-old graves.

Beddoes' father was a distinguished physician, and, following in his steps, the poet took up the study of medicine, and, unlike Keats, stayed by the profession. . . .

Keats gave up surgery because, he confessed, he was afraid that, at the crucial point of some delicate, life-invading operation, he might glimpse fairies dancing in a troupe down some criss-cross slant of sun that came through the window into the operating room, and, his attention distracted, he might so be brought to jeopardize the life of the patient. . . .

Beddoes loved delving and probing into the anatomy and physical construction of man . . . loved delving into mortality and death. Medicine attained with him the dignity of a separate Muse.

Early he abandoned England for Germany . . . and there lived and absorbed the culture of the country till he became almost not an Englishman.

He mixed in republican intrigue and had to flee the country.

We see him coming back to England . . . riding into

town to visit his relatives, astride a donkey . . . and becoming incensed with their misliking his eccentricity and spending six of the ten months of his visit locked in his bedroom smoking furiously at his Teutonic pipe and reading voluminously. . . .

Returning to Frankfort, he there fell in love with a baker named Degen, "a nice-looking young man about nineteen years old, dressed in a blue blouse, and of a natural dignity of manner." . . .

Formerly Beddoes had prided himself on looking like Keats . . . had been called "The Gothic Keats" . . . now it became his determination that he resembled Shakespeare . . . to further resemble him, he let his beard grow. . . .

With Degen, he went rambling about Germany, teaching the boy English . . . resolving to make a great actor of him . . . chartering a theatre at Zurich and presenting him there as "Hotspur." . . .

At Basle, Degen, having had enough of his mad friend, quarreled with him and ran off. . . .

In great dejection Beddoes attempted suicide by slashing his right leg with a razor. In spite of his anatomical knowledge, he somehow failed to sever an artery . . . doctor friends took him under their care . . . he wrote back to England that he had suffered a fall with a horse . . . when left alone, slyly tore the bandages off : . . . gangrene setting in, his leg had to be amputated just below the knee-joint.

With the return to his bedside of the capricious, handsome Degen, Beddoes apparently grew cheerful again . . . wanted to live . . . talked of going to Italy.

But, on the first occasion of his being able to get about on crutches, he bought curari at a chemist's (Tennyson's "hellish curari"—the drug that paralyzes the entire motor

system, while leaving every nerve alert; a drug used by vivisectionists) and killed himself with it.

Beddoes wrecked his ship of song on the reef of poetic extravagance; but a reef of rich, gigantic extravagance . . . and floating silks and precious things were scattered from the wreck . . . a very weltering chaos, to change the simile, not of vapidty and flabbiness, but of stormy, dignified incoherence and of dark, uncreated worlds and a multitude of stars not seen but felt in their motions.

He wrote most of his poetry between the ages of nineteen and twenty-six . . . but it was violent determination rather than inspiration that impelled him . . . he made use of over-vigorous imagery—in blocks of meter clamped together as granite is forcibly held by bands of iron. . . .

All through his verse there is much balderdash about dying maidens and virgins murdered by their lovers.

His "Death's Jest Book" is a charnel house with a huge midnight of stars vaulted over it for a roof. . . .

In personal appearance Beddoes was short and stocky . . . and he DID resemble Keats . . . he was eccentric, independent, wild, brusque-spoken,—at the extreme, coarse and violent. . . .

His family opposed printing his remains, but his friend Kelsall edited them shortly after his death. . . .

His last will and testament is characteristic:

My dear Phillips—

I am food for what I am good for—worms. I have made a will here which I desire to be respected, and add the donative of 20 pounds to Dr. Ecklin, my physician. W. Beddoes must have a case (50 bottles) of champagne Moët 1847 growth to drink my death in. . . .

Thanks for your kindness. Borrow the 20

pounds. You are a good and noble man and your children must look sharp to be like you.

your,
if my own,
ever,

Thomas Lovell Beddoes.

“Much of his work should never have gone into print.”

His star should have shone among the greatest. As it is, it will manage to fight its way intermittently through the clouds that whirl over it.

A maimed giant who frisked grotesquely with the Medieval Dance of Death.

“I ought to have been, among other things, a great poet.”

SPRING'S DRYAD-AWAKENING WHISPER

Here Thou Shalt See

Spring's dryad-wakening whisper call the tree,
And move it to green answers; and beneath,
Each side the river which the fishes breathe,
Daisies and grass, whose tops were never stirred,
Or dews made tremulous, but by foot of bird.
And you shall mark in spring's heaven-tapestried room
Yesterday's knoppe, burst by its wild perfume,
Like woman's childhood, to this morning's bloom;
And here a primrose pale beneath a tree,
And here a cowslip longing for its bee,
And violets and lilies every one
Grazing in the great pasture of the sun,
Beam after beam, visibly as the grass
Is swallowed by the lazy cows that pass.

THE EARTH IS FULL OF CHAMBERS

The earth is full of chambers for the dead,
And every soul is quiet in his bed;
Some who have seen their bodies moulder away,
Antediluvian minds,—most happy they,
Who have no body but the beauteous air,
No body but their minds. Some wretches are
Now lying with the last and only bone
Of their old selves, and that one worm alone
That ate their heart.

LOVE AFTER DEATH

For when our souls are born then will we wed:
Our dust shall mix and grow into one stock,
Our breaths shall make one perfume in one bud,
Our blushes meet each other in a rose,
Our sweeter voices swell some sky-bird's throat
With the same warbling, dwell in some soft pipe,
Or bubble up along some sainted spring's
Musical course, and in the mountain trees
Slumber our deeper tones, by tempests waked:
We will be music, spring, and all fair things,
The while our spirits make a sweeter union
Than melody and perfume in the air.

A CLOCK STRIKING AT MIDNIGHT

Hark to the echo of Time's footsteps; gone
Those moments are into the unseen grave
Of ages. They have vanished nameless. None,
While they are deep under the eddying wave
Of the chaotic past, shall place a stone
Sacred to these, the nurses of the brave,
The mighty and the good. Futurity
Broods on the ocean, hatching 'neath her wing,

Invisible to man,—the century,
That on its hundred feet, a sluggish thing
Gnawing away the world, shall totter by
And sweep dead mortals with it. As I sing
Time, the colossus of the world, that strides
With each foot plunged in darkness, silent glides.



CHARLES JOHNSTON

—1823

THAT VIRTUE OF DISTRESS

There is a virtue which to fortune's height
Follows us not, but in the vale below,
Where dwell the ills of life, disease and woe,
Holds on its steady course, serenely bright:
So some lone star, whose softly beaming light
We mark not in the blaze of solar day,
Comes forth with pure and ever-constant ray,
That makes even beautiful the gleam of night.
Thou art that star, so beauteous and so lone,
That virtue of distress, Fidelity!
And thou, when every joy and hope is flown,
Cling'st to the relics of humanity;
Making with all its sorrows life still dear,
And death, with all its terrors, void of fear.



THOMAS WADE

1805-1895

THOMAS WADE was a fine liberal, and a Shelley enthusiast. He early fell under Shelley's influence, and came to revere the great revolutionary singer—in his own words—

A holy and mighty Poet of the Spirit
That broods and breathes above the universe.—

Wade wrote many poems prefaced with quoted lines from Shelley; in the same spirit with which Kipling prefaced his verse with texts from the Bible.

Wade's first book, "Tasso and the Sisters," showed the influence of Keats.

His first volume of authentic verse flourished a long Latin title—"Mundi et Cordis, de rebus sempiternis et temporariis, Carmina"—in flouting despite of the general reader . . . the discerning took note of the book, speaking of it as "Mundi et Cordis Carmina." It deserved a vogue it did not enjoy.

After the failure of his poetry, Wade turned to the writing of blank verse plays, after the Elizabethan model. His "The Jew of the Aragon, or the Hebrew Queen," was an ardently pro-Semitic play. Though supported by both Charles and Fanny Kemble, it was "literally howled off the stage by the rabble." Subsequently its author printed the play, dedicating it boldly "To the Jews of England," restoring, in capitals that leaped at the eye, those parts that had been deleted by the Play Censor, Colman: observing

—“Of course, the revered name of the Deity, wherever it occurs, was erased by the religious and moral pen of the licenser.”

It would be pleasant to be able to say that this courageous enthusiast was a great poet, but it cannot be said: his poems had “warmth without light,” and he partially belonged to the “Spasmodists”; “his efforts to say fine things frequently result in extravagance.” He was addicted to unpoetic adjectives like “executive” and “substantialized,” and built barbarous compounds such as “clear-expressive”; he dared the monstrosity “interflexed.”

Yet he could write a sonnet of such stupendous fragility as “The Buried Butterfly.”

He married the well-known pianist Lucy Bridgmen, and was very happy with her, loving her to the last with mystic adoration of her womanhood.

His description of Beethoven’s music is most felicitous—

Radiant armies of triumphant souls
In thunder pacing towards eternity.—

Wade’s sayings:—

The spirit of all things felt before he knew.—

When great men are not great we needs must mourn
More than for all the pranks of Littleness.—

Love’s sweet cause lives in the soul’s desire.

DEAR CRITICS! GENTLE JUDGES!

Dear Critics! Gentle Judges! Why so prone
In my songs’ “mingled yarn” to note the worst alone?
Clear-sighted for all specks, to brightness blind!
Nosed to pick one ill scent from out a flower-fed wind!
Eared for one discord, sounding casually,

In a long breath of tender harmony!
Learn'd readers of the gravure o'er the porch;
But of the esoteric ritual of the church
Untutored neophytes! If not for heed
Of him whose passive soul is but the chosen reed,
From which the Universal Pan, soft-breathing,
Makes gentle music swell and soar, like incense wreathing;
Yet for the sake of all the love he sings,
He prays ye—learn to sigh,—and grow less loveless things!

BIRTH AND DEATH

Methinks the soul within the body held
Is as a little babe within the womb,
Which flutters in its antenatal tomb
And stirs and heaves the prison where 'tis celled,
And struggles in strange darkness, undispeled
By all its strivings toward the breath and bloom
Of that aureorean being soon to come—
Strivings of feebleness, by nothing quelled:
And even as birth to the enfranchised child
Which shows to its sweet senses all the vast
Of beauty visible and audible,
Is death unto the spirit undefiled;
Setting it free of limit and the past
And all that in its prison-house befell.

THE MIST OF FAMILIARITY

In this Eternal, Universal Wonder
Of which we are part, and should percipient be,
We move indifferent God's Blue Arch under—
By that dull mist, Familiarity,
Begirt, and sodden into apathy!
Astonishment, nor dread, nor admiration,

Nor panting love, nor trembling adoration,
Our Life from its lethargic courses waking;
Its little self of all things centre making,
Though need and death its sole circumference!

SILENCE, THAT EXTREME REPOSE

Silence remaineth in her peace profound
Inviolable as death; and from the sod
The little stir that still is issuing,
From busy movements of an atom life,
Doth testify of that extreme repose
In which each motion is made audible,
And heard almost the drooping of the rose.

THE HALF-ASLEEP

O, for the mighty wakening that aroused
The old-time prophets to their missions high;
And to blind Homer's inward, sunlike eye
Showed the heart's universe, where he caroused
Radiantly; the fishers poor unhoused,
And sent them forth to teach divinity;
And made our Milton his great dark defy,
To the light of one immortal theme espoused!
But half-asleep are those now most awake;
And, save calm-thoughted Wordsworth, we have none
Who for eternity put time at stake,
And hold a constant course as doth the sun:
We yield but drops, that no deep thirsting slake;
And feebly cease where we have well begun.

THE AIR-SUSPENDED SWORD OF ACCIDENT

When we behold the air-suspended sword
O'er human joy forever pendulous;
And see the earthly pitfalls waiting us

Thickly along life's way; of act or word
We grow incapable, and fain would wait
Stirless and speechless for the coming state,
Wherein the millions of the dust abide—
Their dust, their deeds, and their recorded pride:
And our vowed spirits (like the devotees
In attitudinal monotony
Transfixed in Indian forests, till the trees
O'ergrow them, and the wild birds build thereon)
Seem stricken to their place eternally,
And no more vital than a stock or stone.

THE SUN AND THE DAISY

The tempered Sun, down-verging to the West,
Shone full upon one daisy's lonely bloom;
Of a bleak bank the solitary guest,
And only spirit risen from Winter's tomb!
But fair and bright and perfect-orbed it gleamed;
And, as the Sun the cold encircling sky,
To gild the barrenness around it seemed,
And claimed as constant tribute from the eye:
And worthily: for that vast globe of fire,
Unto the vision which no space controlled,
Would show minute, compared with glories higher,
As unto ours that little disc of gold:
'T is our poor faculties make large and small,
Where the same boundless wonder mantles all.

THE BURIED BUTTERFLY

What lovely things are dead within the sky,
By our corporeal vision undiscerned—
Extinguished suns, that once in glory burned;
And blighted planets mouldering gloomily
Beyond the girdle of the galaxy;

And faded essences in light inurned,
Of creatures spiritual, to that Deep returned
From whence they spring, in far Eternity—
This e'er to know is unto us forbidden;
But much thereto concerning we may deem,
By inference from fact familiar:
Beneath those radiant flowers and bright grass hidden,
Withers a thing as golden as a star
And seeming unsubstantial as a dream.

THE POETS

Bitter and strong and manifold the strife
Which shakes them on that voyage; every wave
Of feeling dashes o'er their weltering heart;
And all the thunder and the flash of thought
Volleys and lightens round their fitful brain,
And their high power, by which the world is wrought
To mightiest sympathies, is grasped in pain.



SONGS OF TWO BROTHERS

FREDERICK TENNYSON

1807-1895

CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER

1808-1879

WHEN ALFRED TENNYSON and his brother Charles were at Oxford, young students (where they matriculated on the same day), they brought out a first slight book, entitled "Songs of Two Brothers,"—copies of which are at present a rarity among bibliophiles, and command a great price. But the title was a misnomer: there was a third brother, Frederick, who contributed his mite to the book. . . .

Sons of a clergyman—the three Tennysons, Frederick, Charles, and Alfred, were all poets.

Alfred was the one to become great and deserve his fame by a lifetime of glorious poetic labour, in which he subordinated every breath and endeavour to the Muse . . . even his love for the woman he married . . . having let her wait ten years for that consummation, because he must first found his poetic career on a solid and unshakeable basis. . . .

Alfred died poet-laureate, not only of England, but of the English-speaking peoples of the world . . . died, revered and aged, moonlight flooding vast about him, a copy of the greatest poet, Shakespeare, lying open in his hands.

Alfred's power never thinned . . . witness his latest poem "Crossing the Bar." He out-distanced all his contemporaries, including Browning. . . .

Having first sought the Kingdom of Poetry,—all else was added unto him. . . .

As for his two brothers:

Charles, preëminently a sonneteer, took orders, and became a country clergyman . . . in time waxing fat and rosily bald . . . becoming a gentle, reactionary curate who was safe for ladies' tea-parties . . . who loved the quiet life of cropped hedges and formal, close-clipped lawns, and a Nature subdued in her moods to English domesticities. . . .

Over-shadowed (as was also Frederick) by his greater brother's authentic and deserved fame and poetic might that soared straight to its objective—Charles yet reveals a fine vein of inspiration that is by no means mediocre; his verse is illumined by occasional flashes of insight nearing his laureate brother's greatness. . . .

Tennyson-Turner shows gentle sympathy for the imprisoned fly on the windowpane, the mouse the cat has caught. He evinces remorse over the one swallow he shot in his youth, sings tenderly of the half-starved winter hare he feeds, of the bird waiting for crumbs, on the window sill.

Of him Hallam wrote,—“His [Alfred's] brother, the author of the sonnets, has entered the Church, and is, I fear, lost to the muses,”—of the Poet-Laureate—“Alfred has resisted all attempts to force him into a profession, preferring poetry and an honorable poverty.”

Charles, on becoming vicar of Grasby, Linconshire, changed his name to Turner in order to succeed to a small property left by a great-uncle, Samuel Turner. Perhaps Alfred's beating him as poet, influenced his changing his name. It has been said so.

Frederick, the eldest brother, more economically secure, went to Florence to live, and there became one of the colony of English expatriates.

He fell in love with and married an Italian lady. He remained most of his life in Italy because he found the climate congenial, and the expenses of daily existence less . . . unlike Byron and Shelley, who sought refuge in the same country because of the storms their conduct and opinions had raised against them in their native land.

Frederick Tennyson was a lover of, and wholly a liver in the Past. He dwelt in a villa on the Fiesole road that had been built on plans drawn for it by Michael Angelo. . . .

There "in a large hall, Frederick Tennyson used to sit in the midst of his forty fiddlers," wrote a contemporary, dwelling humourously on his love for music. . . .

He had an equal love for Roman historic times . . . was, for instance, tremendously happy, in coming upon Cicero's villa "with its mosaic pavement leading through lemon gardens down to the sea, and a little fountain as old as the Augustan age, welling up as fresh as when its silver sounds mingled with the voice of the orator."

Mrs. Browning wrote of him, in a letter of hers sent back to England,—

"Mr. Tennyson married an Italian, and has four children. He has much of the atmosphere poetic about him, a dreamy, speculative, shy man . . . good and pure-minded."

Of his poetry she expressed the just opinion "it's the smell of the rose rather than a rose—very sweet notwithstanding." Less aptly, and with brotherly bias in his favour, Alfred's appraisal of it was "organ-tones echoing among mountains."

Truth was, that all Frederick's verse was most unorgan-

like—was rather thin, worn stuff . . . including not only his lyrics, but his thousand and then some lines on the old trite mythologies that the second-rate and third-rate poets had already done to death.

He was preëminently the writer of the poetic “exercise.” “Come now, let us indite a poem on ‘The Cloud,’ on ‘Noon,’ on ‘The Skylark and the Poet,’ on ‘Hope,’ etc., etc.”

Yet there never lacks the certain fine feeling of the gentleman of culture proficient in the Classics and in English prosody, who has persuaded himself of his being a poet.

Frederick Tennyson was, like his famous brother, strong, haughty, passionate; dark and tall.

There is a picture of him in his old age (he was ninety when he died) sitting at a table, the poet-patriarch, holding a book up edgewise . . . thin, straggling hair hangs down his neck, and a long moustache droops . . . there is a certain gentleness in his face that Alfred’s face lacked.

The poems of Charles Tennyson-Turner—

LOVE OF HOME—A REJOINDER

Hence! with your jeerings petulant and low;
My love of Home no circumstance can shake;
Too ductile for the change of place to break,
And far too passionate for thee to know;
I and yon sycamore have grown together;
How on yon slope the shifting sunsets lie,
None know like me and mine; and, tending hither,
Flows the strong current of my memory;
From that same flower-bed, ever dear to me,
I learned how marigolds do bloom and fade;
And from the grove, which skirts this garden-glade,
I had my earliest thoughts of Love and Spring;

Thou wottest not how the heart of man is made;
I learn from thee what change the world can bring.

THE VACANT CAGE

Our little bird in his full day of health
With his gold-coated beauty made us glad,
But when disease approached with cruel stealth,
A sadder interest our smiles forbade.
How oft we watched him, when the night hours came,
His poor head buried near his bursting heart,
Which beat within a puffed and troubled frame;
But he has gone at last, and played his part:
The seed-glass, slighted by his sickening taste,
The fountain, where his fevered bill was dipt,
The little moulted feathers, saffron-tipt,
The perches, which his faltering feet embraced,
All these remain—not even his bath removed—
But where 's the spray and flutter that we loved?

THE PLANET AND THE TREE

The evening breeze is blowing from the lea
Upon the fluttering elm; thou hast a mind,
O star, methinks, to settle in the tree—
But, ever baffled by the pettish wind,
Thou movest back and forward, and I find
A pastime for my thoughts in watching thee;
In thy vast orbit thou art rolling now,
And wottest not how to my human eye
Thou seemest flouted by a waving bough,
Serving my fancy's needs right pleasantly.

DREAMS

Most dreams are like the tide upon the beach
Rolling the baseless pebbles, till their place
Is changed and changed again, beyond the reach
Of the best waking memory to retrace
The loose and helpless motion; these, and those
That stand like rocks, engraved with name and date,
And cognizable words of coming fate,
What mean they? who among our schoolmen knows?
What means this double power to rave and teach?
This common fund of toys and verities?
Of dooming oracles and foolish cries?
Now kept apart, now blending each with each—
Abortive interests, and unreal ties,
And prophecies no daylight can impeach!

A BRILLIANT DAY

O keen pellucid air! nothing can lurk
Or disavow itself on this bright day;
The small rain-plashes shine from far away,
The tiny emmet glitters at his work;
The bee looks blithe and gay, and as she plies
Her task, and moves and sidles round the cup
Of this spring flower, to drink its honey up,
Her glassy wings, like oars that dip and rise,
Gleam momentarily. Pure-bosomed, clear of fog,
The long lake glistens, while the glorious beam
Bespangles the wet joints and floating leaves
Of water-plants, whose every joint receives
His light; and jellies of the spawning frog,
Unmarked before, like piles of jewels seem!

THE BEE-WISP

Our window-panes enthrall our summer bees;
(To insect woes I give this little page)—
We hear them threshing in their idle rage
Those crystal floors of famine, while, at ease,
Their out-door comrades probe the nectaries
Of flowers, and into all sweet blossoms dive;
Then home, at sundown, to the happy hive,
On forward wing, straight through the dancing flies:
For such poor strays a full-plumed wisp I keep,
And when I see them pining, worn, and vexed,
I brush them softly with a downward sweep
To the raised sash—all-angered and perplexed:
So man, the insect, stands on his defense
Against the very hand of Providence.

THE LATTICE AT SUNRISE

As on my bed at dawn I mused and prayed,
I saw my lattice pranked upon the wall,
The flaunting leaves and fluttering birds withal—
A sunny phantom interlaced with shade;
“Thanks be to heaven” in happy mood I said,
“What sweeter aid my matins could befall
Than this fair glory from the East hath made?
What holy sleights hath God, the Lord of all,
To bid us feel and see! we are not free
To say we see not, for the glory comes
Nightly and daily, like the flowing sea;
His lustre pierceth through the midnight glooms
And, at prime hour, behold! He follows me
With golden shadows to my secret rooms.”

ON THE ECLIPSE OF THE MOON

One little noise of life remained—I heard
The train pause in the distance, then rush by,
Brawling and hushing, like some busy fly
That murmurs and then settles; nothing stirred
Beside. The shadow of our travelling earth
Hung on the silver moon, which mutely went
Through the grand process, without token sent,
Or any sign to call the gazer forth,
Had I not chanced to see; dumb was the vault
Of heaven, dumb the fields—no zephyr swept
The forest walks, or through the coppice crept;
No other sound the stillness did assault,
Save that faint-brawling railway's move and halt;
So perfect was the silence Nature kept.

THE SCHOOLBOY'S DREAM

'T was the half-year's last day, a festal one;
Light tasks and feast and sport, hoop, cricket, kite,
Employed us fully, till the summer-night
Stole o'er the happy roofs of Alderton.
Homer indoors, and field-games out of school,
Made medley of my dreams; for, when I slept,
The quaintest vision o'er my fancy swept,
That ever served the lordship of misrule:
Our hoops through gods and heroes ran amuck;
Our kites o'erhung the fleet, a public gaze!
And one wild ball the great Achilles struck—
Oh! how he towered and lightened at the stroke!
But though his formal pardon I bespoke,
I told him plainly 't was our holidays.

GOUT AND WINGS

(This rosy-gilled otherwise-comfortable parson suffered from the gout, and called himself "Podager.")

The pigeons fluttered fieldward, one and all,
I saw the swallows wheel, and soar, and dive;
The little bees hung poised before the hive,
Even Partlet hoised herself across the wall:
I felt my earth-bound lot in every limb,
And in my envious mood, I half-rebelled;
When lo! an insect crossed the page I held,
A little helpless minim, slight and slim;
Ah! sure, there was no room for envy there,
But gracious aid and condescending care;
Alas! my pride and pity were misspent,
The atom knew his strength, and rose in air!
My gout came tingling back, as off he went,
A wing was opened at me everywhere!

LETTY'S GLOBE

When Letty had scarce passed her third glad year
And her young, artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a coloured sphere
Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
She patted all the world; old empires peeped
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand
Was welcome to all frontiers. How she leaped,
And laughed, and prattled in her world-wide bliss;
But when we turned her sweet unlearnéd eyes
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,
"O, yes, I see it, Letty's home is there!"
And while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

ON SHOOTING A SWALLOW IN EARLY YOUTH

I hoard a little spring of secret tears,
For thee, poor bird; thy death-blow was my crime:
From the far past it has flowed on for years;
It never dries; it brims at swallow-time.
No kindly voice within me took thy part,
Till I stood o'er thy last faint flutterings;
Since then, methinks, I have a gentler heart,
And gaze with pity on all wounded wings.
Full oft the vision of thy fallen head,
Twittering in highway dust, appeals to me;
Thy helpless form, as when I struck thee dead,
Drops out from every swallow-flight I see.
I would not have thine airy spirit laid,
I seem to love the little ghost I made.

Frederick Tennyson—Two Poems

THE DEATH OF THE NEW YEAR

He was a Conqueror terrible and strong
In Life—and he is beautiful in death;
He was a Poet with harmonious breath,
He was a Lover with a charming tongue;
His festal nights, his triumphs, and his songs,
Mourn ye—his beauty to the Deep descended;
His very tears are sweeter, being ended,
Than aught that to futurity belongs.

Futurity is dark, the Past is dim;
He was the fairest out of all his race;
In strength and glory none were like to him,
Mourn—for to-day ye saw him face to face;
And let us sing a dirge about his grave,
And speak good words of one we cannot save.

THE TRANSIENT GLEAM

Two aged men that had been foes for life,
Met by a grave and wept—and in those tears
They washed away the memory of their strife;
They wept again the loss of all the years.

Two youths, discoursing amid tears and laughter,
Poured out their trustful hearts unto each other;
They never met before and never after,
Yet each remembered he had found a brother.

A girl and boy amid the dawning light
Glanced at each other at a palace door;
That look was hope by day, and dreams by night;
And yet they never saw each other more.

Should gentle spirits born for one another
Meet only in sad death, the end of all?
Should hearts that spring, like rivers, near each other,
As far apart into the ocean fall?



PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

1816-1902

AFTER BYRON and Shelley, and before the appearance of Tennyson and Browning, came a dull, dragging period in poetry . . . a period of mediocre, general flatness. . . .

Poets like Heraud were composing reams of blank and rhymed verse, heavy with a bad tradition of religious dullness. . . .

This man Heraud, in a silly fashion, styled himself a "wild son of meditation" . . . there never was a versifier weaker and tamer in the history of the language.

Heraud attacked Byron as a "demoniac."

The poets of his ilk, and, sadly enough, a true poet like Sir Henry Taylor, strayed far from the valid doctrine of the Wartons, that "Invention and Imagination are the chief faculties of a poet." . . . Hayley's feebleness assumed, in the understanding of many, all the desired qualities of the Muse. . . .

Sir Henry Taylor, in the preface to his bulky drama, "Philip van Artevelde," sounded a call for "reasonableness" in poetry . . . which, however plausibly worded, was but another pernicious attempt at grounding poetry on a moral instead of on an aesthetic foundation.

Every contemporary poetaster launched into blind onslaughts against the moral conduct of Byron and Shelley—after which they dishonestly proceeded to confuse their poetry with their private behaviour. As the preëminent quality of the poetry of both these singers was ecstasy and a

fiery vigour: hereafter ecstasy was to be anathema . . . and song that professed inspiration was to be frowned upon. STASY was to be preferred to EXstasy. Two feet plodding along, to wings! Thus they unlearnt the poet's first lesson—that passion is the sole coinage of Song . . . and that the poet who denies inspiration is as false to the Muse as the Christian who denies his God is to his religion.

Philip James Bailey gladly accepted the appellation of "ecstasist." . . .

As moral and religious a man as any feeble orthodox twitterer, he took Byron to his heart; when, a young man, he received as a present from his father a copy of "Childe Harold." It was the book that he called for a few days before he died.

The elder Bailey had been a poet of parts; while recognizing his own less-than-talent, he considered writing poetry one of the highest callings a human being could give himself to. His attitude was that of the old Greeks. The bard was more than a singer—he was also prophet and priest. . . .

He determined that his son should be a great poet—that he would do all that in his power lay, to make him one. From his infancy Philip was "prepared as in a cloister for the celestial profession of poet."

Retiring home from school at the age of nineteen he announced himself ready to write his first great work—the epic-drama "Festus."

Secluded in "panelled rooms, in a house with an old-world garden that had pools of goldfish and a tree grown from a slip of the willow on Napoleon's tomb" the lad set to work. In three years of intense application "Festus" was produced.

Solemnly the father called in a group of friends to whom it was reverently read; the young man had not missed fire; he had achieved the task.

The reading world confirmed the applause of his friends; at one stroke, and without a declaration of poetic principles, Bailey thrust aside the school of "reasonableness."

Everybody waited for his next book; expecting another masterpiece; but he never wrote anything worth printing afterward. His "Angel World" was very bad; his "Mystic Age" was worse.

He passed the rest of his life re-writing the first ten-thousand-line edition of "Festus," and adding to it . . . piecing in the best lines of his succession of failures . . . till his masterpiece bulked, a formidable epic of forty thousand lines.

Whenever he turned to his sole work of genius, his power again burned high. Most of the additions he made were worthy of the original creation.

The Spasmodists took example of him, for their bold imagery and startling figures of speech. . . . Alexander Smith, Bertram Dobell, Stanyan Bigg . . . all of whom Bailey gently repudiated, disclaiming his having any part in the movement. . . .

Bailey's inspiration was drawn from Goethe's Faust.

Festus, the protagonist of the poem, is an Anglo-Saxon theological Faust.

"Festus" is an Universalist Epic: in the end, all, including the Fallen Angels, are saved.

"The Unitarians and Transcendentalists of New England put it beside the Bible."

Bailey boldly confessed to rivalry with Goethe's Faust. He thought his own work better: appraising Faust as "that vast jumble of Greek and Gothic fable laid before the world by Goethe in divisional and therefore imperfect production."

Bailey condemned "the confused Arianism and . . . virtual dualism of Milton, Byron's intermittent scepticism and reiterated Manicheism, Shelley's rapid and irrational athe-

ism," and "the infuriated predictions of everlasting torments" in Young's "Night Thoughts" and Pollok's "Course of Time."

He had no doubts about his own epic—with "its SOLUTIONS (!) of such vexed questions as the nature, origin, and endurance of evil . . . the ontological identity of unity and infinity, etc." He assured his readers in one of his prose articles that "no more orderly and methodical poem is to be found in the whole range of English literature"—(this, in repudiation of the chaotic epics and epic-dramas of the Spasmodists, as derivative from his poetry).

The older Bailey grew the more he resembled the traditional, dignified Bard of ancient days . . . with his silver hair and beard. . . .

"He might have sat to any scene-painter in Christendom as the type of a poet," remarks Gosse.

"A song-intoxicated man . . . the greatest of the modern optimists."

He was noted for his "kindly fostering of younger poets always."

Bailey's sayings:

Every act of God is infinite.—

We were made to be saved.—

The heart is its own fate.—

Repentance never yet did aught on earth;

It undoes many good things.—

The good are never fatalists. The bad

Alone act by necessity.—

Love hath as many vanities

As charms.—

To the high air sunshine and cloud are one.—

So long as the punishment endures
The crime lasts.—

The truth is never perilous to the true,
Nor knowledge to the wise.—

The worst way to improve the world
Is to condemn it.—

The divine insanity of dreams.—

It would be well, I think, to live as though
No more were to be looked for; to be good
Because it is best, here; and leave hope and fear
For lives below ourselves.—

All morality can teach is—Bear!
And all religion can inspire is—Hope!—

The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat
Oneself. All sin is easy after that.—

—Poor trite thing,
Called moderation, every one can have;
And modesty, God knows, is suffering.—
To joy in what might be if will and power
For good would work together but one hour.—

All aspiration is a toil;
But inspiration cometh from above,
And is no labour.—

Youth loves and lives on change.—

—There is no past;
And the future is the fiction of a fiction;
The present moment is eternity.—

One drop falls, lasts, dries up—but a drop;
Another begins a river.—

All are devils to themselves;
And every man his own great fate.—

Mind,
Time's giant pupil.—
Fine thoughts are wealth.—
The worm which suffers mincing into parts
May sprout forth heads and tails, but never hearts.—
Every man's life has its apocrypha.—
We suffer less from pains than pleasures.—
The insipidity of innocence.—
Respect is what we owe, love what we give.—
The heart will have its swing, the world its way.—
Walk boldly and wisely in that light thou hast.—
He is a fool who is not for love and beauty.—
Man is a military animal,
Glories in gunpowder, and loves parade.—
The world . . . is not so bad as good men make it out.—
The world, the great imposture, still succeeds.—
Death must be undergone ere understood.—
Eden, where life was toilless, and gave man
All things to live with, nothing to live for.—
The truth of truths is love.—
To be good is to do good.—
There is no passion evil in itself.—
I rather love
A splendid failing than a petty good.—
Love, beauty, honour, bravery, and wit,
The peerage of the heart.—
Love spends his all, and still hath store.—
Doth love not weigh the world's vast lie?—
Nothing is lost in nature.—

The whole world is in the mind of God,
What a thought is in ours.—
A worm hath rights
A king cannot despoil him of.—
He hath no power who hath no power to use.—
I would rather
Obey thee, beauty, than rule men by millions.—
Nothing comes to us too soon but sorrow.—
Could we but think with the intensity
We love with, we might do great things.—
Kindness is wisdom.—
We live not to ourselves, our work is life.—
Dreams are rudiments
Of the great state to come.—
Hell is its own moral.—
The last lure,—power.—
Ambition ruined by its own success.—
The dark gods of the heart.—
All time is but a second to the dead.—
Great thoughts, like great deeds, need
No trumpets.—
Man is but half man without woman.—
The ill
Of being loved by those whom we love not.—
Beauty cannot sin.—
Does the oak or reed
Feel the strong storm most?.—
The ground
Of all great thoughts is sadness.
My home is everywhere where spirit is.—

To act is power's habit.—

Unless ye have sinned ye cannot enter heaven.—

The cold obedience which we give to God.—

There is no blasphemy in love but doubt,

No sin, but to deceive.—

Is pleasure crime? Forbid it, God of bliss!—

Each is better than the other thinks.—

Evil has more activity, if good

More strength.

I have quoted here but a few of the fine proverbs in Festus—

Now for the freshness and rare bravery of his figures of speech—

Death does his work

In secret and in joy intense, untold,

As though an earthquake smacked its mumbling lips

O'er some thick-peopled city.—

Night

Star-armed, shining through the deathless air.—

The worlds

Are but Thy (God's) shining footprints upon space!—

This strange phantom comes from overthought,

Like the white lightning from a day too hot.—

The worm of the world hath eaten out my heart.—

To live like light or die in light like dew.—

Stringing the stars at random round her head,

Like a pearl network, there she sits—bright night!—

My heart shook this building of my breast,

Like a live engine.—

The morning peeps her blue eye on the east.—

God shall lay his hand upon the earth,
And crush it up like a red leaf.—
Green, dewy Earth, who standest . . .
Singing and pouring sunshine on thy head
As naiad native water.—
Sea . . .
Tossing thy wavy locks in sparkling play,
Like to a child awakening with the light
To laughter.—
Tide, the moonslave.—
Walk softly as above a grave.—
The gold sunshine . . .
Catching by its soft brown beard, the moss.—
The soul, the rich, star-travelled stranger.—
Tomblike tracts,
Fit to receive the skeleton of Death
When he is dead.—
God worketh slowly: and a thousand years
He takes to lift his hand off.—
The ever-maiden morn.—
Clinging to error as a dormant bat
To a dead bough.—
The toil divine of verse,
Which like a burning bush, doth guest a god.—
Icebergs pure and pointed as star
Afar off glittering, of invisible
Depth, and dissolving in the light above.—
If Time thy foe hath been,
Be quick! shake hands, man, with Eternity!—
The world's last sand is run:
The night is feeding on the sun.—

Heart guiltless of all mirth
As is the oracle, of an extinct god.—
The dim traditions of eternity,
Or time's first golden moments.—
Perdition and destruction dwelt in him
Like to a pair of eagles in one nest.
His eyeballs burned
Revolving lightnings like a world on fire.
The shadow of a cloud upon a lake,
O'er which the wind hath all day held his breath.
With the still action of a star, all light.
They who set their shoulders to the stalled world's wheel.
Cut up old moons
Into new stars.
Words are like seashells on the shore; they show
Where the mind ends, not how far it has been.
The sun's red sea-death.

Bright as a morning in heaven—
Friendship hath passed me like a ship at sea;
And I have seen no more of it!—
The roaring of the wind
As though it came to carry one way—
The air-walled world—
Waken like a bride
With a long blush of love to a new life—
Foot of fiend
Left its hot imprint—
The fiends . . .
In one immense mass broke down from Heaven
Cliff-like—

Occasionally a forcible metaphor in bad taste—such as
—I am egg-full of life!

Philip James Bailey inwove startling and unusual figures of speech with the fibre of philosophic and religious thought . . . the Spasmodist learned the trick of this—a trick carried over from the Euphuists and the Metaphoric School of Donne and Cowley . . . the Spasmodists were for the most part content with the striking figure of speech, the metaphor of unexpected beauty . . . their thought-content was slight—often there was no thought-content. This is why Bailey disclaimed them for disciples. They clung to the conventional meters.

The Free Verse poets of comparatively recent date carried on the mistaken and false tradition, clinging to the startling metaphor and simile only; abolishing the old forms.

That they must have made a careful study of the older eccentrics is evident: I have known several who have studied their Donne not wisely but too well. And there are endless reminiscences to be found in their efforts, of The Metaphysical or Metaphoric Poets; of the Spasmodists; and of “sports” (biologically speaking) like Bailey:

A salient resemblance between H. D.’s famous poem “Oread” and a passage in “Festus” occurs to me:

Lucifer (taking Festus with him on his supernatural horse-back ride through the air all over the world) speaking—

SEE what a long long track
Of dust and fire BEHIND
For miles and miles aback!
And shrill and strong,
As we shoot along,
Whistles and WHIRS
LIKE A FOREST OF FIRS
FALLING, the cold north wind.

OREAD (BY H.D.)

WHIRL up, sea, . . .

Splash your great pines

On our rocks.

Hurl your GREEN over us—

Cover us with your pools of FIRS.

The Capitals are mine, to emphasize the similar sounds that sang in the memory of the latter poet . . . echoes from "Festus."

THE WORLD'S WAYS

To learn to detect, distrust, despise mankind—

To ken a false factitious glare mid much

That shines with seeming saintlike purity—

To gloss misdeeds—to trifle with great truths—

To pit the brain against the heart, and plead

Wit before wisdom,—these are the world's ways. . . .

All this boasted knowledge of the world

To me seems but to mean acquaintance with

Low things, or evil, or indifferent.

DEATH INHERENT

Men look on death as lightning, always far

Off, or in Heaven. They know not it is in

Themselves, a strong and inward tendency,

The soul of every atom, every hair.

THE QUARRY CORNERED

When once you know the sport—

The crowded pack of passions in full cry—

The sweet deceits, the tempting obstacles—

The smile, the sigh, the tear, and the embrace—

All the delights of love at last in one,

With kisses close as stars in the milky way,

In at the death! you cry, though 't were your own.

THE DEVIL'S ADVICE ON LOVE-MAKING

Droop your head—sigh deep—play the fool, in short,
One hour, and she will play the fool forever.
Mind! it is folly to tell women truth!
They would rather live on lies so they be sweet.
Never be long in one mind to one love.
You change your practice with your subject. All
Differ. But yet, who knows one woman well
By heart, knows all. It is my experience.

ON!

There is a firefly in the southern clime
Which shineth only when upon the wing;
So is it with the mind: when once we rest,
We darken. On! said God unto the soul!

A WORLD OF LASTING LOVELINESS

This is a world where every loveliest
Lasts longest; where decay lifts never head . . .
The flower fades not,
The beautiful die never, here: Death lies
A-dreaming—he has nought to do—the babe
Plays with his darts. Nought dies but what should die . . .
The soil
Is ever fresh and fragrant as a rose—
The skies, like one wide rainbow, stand on gold.

GREAT MEN

Men whose great thoughts possess us like a passion
Through every limb and the whole heart; whose words
Haunt us as eagles haunt the mountain air . . .
Men who walk up to fame as to a friend
Or their own house . . .

LUCY'S SONG

For every leaf the loveliest flower
Which Beauty sighs for from her bower—
For every star a drop of dew—
For every sun a sky of blue—
For every heart a heart as true . . .

For all who toil at honest fame,
A proud, a pure, a deathless name;
For all who love, who loving bless,
Be life one long, kind, close caress—
Be life all love, all happiness.

THE POWER OF PEACE

Peace hath more might than war. High brows are calm.
Great thoughts are still as stars; and truths, like suns,
Stir not; though many systems tend round them.
Mind's step is still as death's; and all great things
Which cannot be controlled, whose end is good.

LIFE'S MORE THAN BREATH

Life 's more than breath and the quick round of blood,
It is a great spirit and a busy heart.
The coward and the small in soul scarce do live.
One generous feeling—one great thought—one deed
Of good, ere night, would make life longer seem
Than if each year might number a thousand days,—
Spent as is this by the nations of mankind.
We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best.

AMERICA

America! half-brother of the world!
With something good and bad of every land;
Greater than thee have lost their seat—
Greater scarce none can stand.

WHAT IS IT?

What is it to die?
I cannot hold the meaning more than can
An oak's arms clasp the blast that blows on it.
There is an air-like something which must be,
And yet not to be seen, nor to be touched.

YET MERIT OR DEMERIT NONE

Yet merit or demerit none I see
In nature, human or material,
In passions or affections good or bad. . . .
Is thunder evil or is dew divine?
Does virtue lie in sunshine, sin in storm!

THE CURSE OF A HIGH SPIRIT

—The price one pays for pride is mountain-high,
There is a curse beyond the rack of death—
A woe, wherein God hath put out his strength—
A pain past all the mad wretchedness we feel,
When the sacred secret hath flown out of us,
And the heart broken open by deep care, —
The curse of a high spirit famishing.

DUET

Helen—
I am so happy with thee.
Festus—

And I.

They tell us virtue lies in self-denial.
My virtue is indulgence. I was born
To gratify myself unboundedly,
So that I wronged none else. These arms were given me
To clasp the beautiful, and cleave the wave;
These limbs to leap and wander where I will;
These eyes to look on everything without
Effort; these ears to list my loved one's voice;
These lips to be divinised by her kiss:
And every sense, pulse, passion, power, to be
Swollen into sunny ripeness.

Helen—

Virtue is one
With nature, or 't is nothing: it is love.

Festus—

I come fresh from thee every time we meet,
Steeped in the still sweet dew of thy soft beauty,
Like earth at day-dawn, lifting up her head
Out of her sleep, star-watched, to face the sun—
So I, to front the world, on leaving thee.

BARDSHIP

First of all,
Care not about the name, but bind thyself,
Body and soul, to nature, hiddenly.
Lo, the great march of stars from earth to earth,
Through Heaven. The earth speaks inwardly alone.
Let no man know thy business, save some friend,—
A man of mind above the run of men;
For it is with all men and with all things.
The bard must have a kind, courageous heart,
And natural chivalry to aid the weak.
He must believe the best of everything;
Love all below, and worship all above. . . .

MOTHER AND SIRE

Experience and imagination are
Mother and sire of song.

THERE CAME A HAND

There came a hand between the sun and us,
And its five fingers made five nights in air.
God tore the glory from the sun's broad brow,
And flung the flaming scalp off flat to Hell.
I saw Him do it; and it passed close by us.
And then I heard a long, cold skeleton scream,
Like a trumpet whining through a catacomb.

I LOOKED AND SAW

I looked, and saw
Time on his two great wings—one, night—one, day—
Fly, moth-like, right into the flickering sun;
So that the sun went out, and they both perished.

HE SAID "I AM DECAY"

And there rose
Out of the earth a giant thing, all earth;
His eye was earthy, and his arm was earthy:
He had no heart. He but said, "I am Decay";
And, as he spake, he crumbled into earth,
And there was nothing of him.

THERE IS NO DISAPPOINTMENT

There is no disappointment we endure
One half so great as we are to ourselves.
We make our hearts the centres of all hopes,
All powers, all rewards, remembering not
That centres are imaginary points.

Imaginary circles only too
Are perfect; therefore, draw life as we may,
Round as a world, or as an atom round,
And pure as virgin's visionary dream,
Or perfect faith's regenerative wave—
It fails to match the true invisible
Whereof we labour.

I WILL AS SOON

I will as soon attempt to entice a star
To perch upon my finger; or the wind
To follow me like a dog, as think to keep
A woman's heart again.

TRANSCENDENCE

Who that hath lain lonely on a high hill,
In the imperious silence of full noon,
With nothing but the clear dark sky about him,
Like God's hand laid upon the head of earth—
But hath expected that some natural spirit
Should start out of the universal air . . .
As one in act to teach mysterious things,
Explain that he must die?—and that having got
As high as earth can lift him up—as far
Above that thing, the world, as flesh can mount—
Over the tyrant wind, and the clouded lightning,
And the round rainbow—and that having gained
A lofty and a more mysterious beauty
Of feeling—something like a starry darkness
Seizing the soul—say he must die—and vanish?
Who hath not, at such moments, felt as now
I feel, that to be happy one must die?

IS PLEASURE CRIME?

Is pleasure crime? Forbid it, God of bliss!
Who spurn at this world's pleasures, lie to God;
And show they are not worthy of the next.
What are Thy joys we know not—nor can we
Come near Thee, in Thy power, nor truth, nor justice;
The nearest point wherein we come toward Thee,
Is loving—making love—and being happy.
Thou wilt not chronicle our sandlike sins;
For sin is small, and mean, and barren. Good,
Only is great, and generous, and fruitful.
Number the mountains, not the sands, O God!



COVENTRY PATMORE

1823-1896

COVENTRY KERSEY DIGHTON PATMORE, from his childhood to his day of death, was under the dominance of women. First there was his strong-minded grandmother who taught him "to read and to write, to knit and darn." She also taught him to say his earliest sentence—"Coventry is a clever fellow."

This powerful old person at the age of eighty had not a grey thread in her coal-black hair, nor a tooth missing from her strong jaws. If she hadn't met her death "by falling down stairs, in her ninety-third year" God knows how long she might not have lived!

Patmore's mother was stern and morose. From her he inherited his later-developed stubborn inflexibility.

Patmore's father, Peter George Patmore, was a harum-scarum chap who early blackened himself with the scandal of a duel in which, as second, by bad advice, he brought about the murder of the principal on whose side he officiated. It was the celebrated duel between Scott and Christie, in Hyde Park.

Christie fired the first shot in the air. "Scott, it is thought, would have done so, too, had not his second, Peter George Patmore, exclaimed, 'you must not speak; you have nothing for it now but firing.' Scott aimed at Christie, who, in response, shot him dead. . . .

Patmore senior shared enough of the feminine to influence his woman-ridden son. He trotted the boy out on

every drawing-room occasion, to show him off. In books of verse, Coventry "read only what his father had marked."

The father hopped off to the Continent, on losing all his money in railroad speculation . . . leaving his two sons stranded in London, and struggling to subsist on translations from the French and German. . . .

The young poet's fortune took a better turn when Monckton Milnes, seeing him at a tea-party, asked the hostess—"And who is your young friend with the frayed coat cuffs?"—having been assured that he was a real genius—"We must see to it that he never lacks bread."

The colloquy resulted in Patmore's being appointed one of the supernumerary assistants in the Department of Printed Books, in the British Museum. . . .

"I may say," Patmore declared, "that I read tens of thousands of books on the forty miles of shelves in the British Museum." . . .

A fiercely proud gyneolatrous male virgin, Patmore, on entering into his first marriage, determined to maintain monogamy as a thing of eternity as well as of time.

The girl he married "knew Latin, Greek, French, and Coventry Patmore's own poems." . . . "Above all, she has not associated much with other girls."

This was the Emily Patmore whom, later, the embittered Jane Welch Carlyle described as "always trying to look like a medallion."

It was to his wife that Patmore owed the inspiration for "The Angel in the House." She "helped him in its composition." "He largely depended on her for material." "The Angel in the House' owes whatever completeness it has to her. Many of my best thoughts stand verbatim as she gave them me," confessed the poet.

Patmore was noble in his intent to sing "the infinite mystery and delicacy of marriage"—

I think with utterance free to raise
That hymn for which the whole world longs,
A worthy hymn in woman's praise . . .
It is my chosen task
To sing her worth as Maid and Wife.
Nor happier post than this I ask,
To live her laureate all my life.—

If the poet had but gone on to effect that promise! But there was much of the silly prig and sanctimonious hypocrite of passion in his make-up—in passages, for instance, when he wrote—

I did not call you “dear” or “love”
I think, till after Frank was born.—

And—“the profanation of a kiss”—given to his wife!
Here are a few more examples of his mewling insipidity—

And evermore, for either's sake,
To the sweet folly of the dove,
She joins the cunning of the snake
To rivet and exalt his love;
Her mode of candour is deceit;
And what she thinks from what she'll say,
(Although I 'll never call her cheat),
Lies far as Scotland from Cathay.
Without his knowledge he was won;
Against his nature kept devout;
She 'll never tell him how 't was done,
And he will never find it out.—

Another—

Be man's hard virtues highly wrought,
But let my gentle mistress be

In every look and word and thought
Nothing but sweet and womanly!
Her virtues please my virtuous mood,
But what at all times I admire
Is not that she is wise or good,
But just the thing that I desire.—

And—

“I saw you take his kiss!” “’T is true.”
“O, modesty!” “’T was strictly kept:
He thought me asleep; as least I knew
He thought I thought he thought I slept.”.—

But enough of this wedded love fashioned so that its most intimate moments could be fully discussed and yet not shock the vicar and his assembled old maids at their tea on the Church lawn. . . .

I think a good clout of ruffianly passion would have come as a distinct relief, to any self-respecting woman, even of the mid-Victorian era, after listening to a lover who could sing—

Joy’s most high and constant mood
Is lost, not found, in dancing blood.—

After the death of Emily, his first wife,—to whom he proved a true and devoted mate,—Patmore became a mystic, and a sincere and worthy convert to the Catholic Church.

It was in Rome that he fell in love with a Catholic woman of wealth. The second marriage which followed was also a genuine affair of the heart, in spite of the fortune his new bride brought him.

With his second wife’s money Patmore bought a secluded country estate, and its improvement grew his continual pleasure.

In his retirement “he gave way to an intellectual and

spiritual arrogance . . . and isolated himself in a cloudy metaphysical complacency."

"This laureate of the tea table, with his humdrum stories of girls that smell of bread and butter, is, in his inmost heart, the most arrogant and visionary of mystics."

"Tender and devoted within his family circle, outside he viewed pessimistically what he phrased 'the amorous and vehement drift of man's herd to hell.'"

Patmore's appearance:

"Tall, slender, looks very young till he pulls his hat off. He is not handsome, but has an interesting face."

"Wherever he went when young, he was noticeable for 'an ardent yet noisy enthusiasm'—later he became a tall, spare, silent man."

Patmore became the half-god of the Preraphaelite Brotherhood. The group held a great opinion of his literary judgments. Rossetti submitted to him, before publication, his translations from the early Italian Poets, and Patmore's saying "It is the last rub that polishes the mirror" was adopted as one of the Brotherhood's mottoes.

His personal peculiarities:

In his ornate, wealthy house, he wrote in a plain-furnished attic: table, sofa, chairs, a few books were all it held. To this retreat he invited a few particular friends.

He was maniacally careful of books. When reading he usually placed the book on the table, only touching it with his hand on turning the leaf. . . .

"I could not make 'X' a friend. Did you see how careless he was with that book?"

In his youth Patmore did not smoke; when in a room where others smoked, it gave him a headache . . . later, he smoked incessantly—"saying that even if his physician were to tell him he was shortening his life by the habit, he would reply that time was not to be measured by years, but

by thought; and tobacco was especially conducive to fruitful meditation" . . . "to be asked to smoke, by him, became the greatest sign of friendship."

Concerning his writings—

A writer in "Blackwoods"—"Patmore's work—a wax figure instead of a statue."

"Milton was Patmore's master—from whom he apparently learned nothing."

"Tennyson thinks that Patmore may surpass him."

"Burning with a splendid ambition, he never finished a single book."

He was more an improvisator than what he boasted of being—a finished poet. Once, in a flash of self-understanding he admitted himself "nothing but a miserable, deluded poetaster."

But in spite of "an intrusion of commonplace and banal ideas such as no power on earth can raise to the true domain of poetry," his wings rightly affixed, few singers have soared to his heights of occasional exaltation—as for instance, in the lines—

Man may see
Stretched awful in the hushed midnight
The ghost of his eternity.—

Patmore's sayings:—

The Devil is the only being purely reasoning and analytic.—

For what 's base but content to grow
With less good than the best we know!.—

Much woe that man befalls
Who does not run when sent, nor come when Heaven
calls.—

The many's weedy growth withers the gracious few.—

Life is not life at all without delight,
Nor has it any might.—

Rules only make it hard to live.—

And, in an unguarded moment, Patmore wrote;
Woman is still by nature fool.

I cannot help but append a few more of his insipidities:—

Pure as a bride's blush, when she says
"I will" unto she knows not what.—

And here, God save us all, is the prime mid-Victorian description of what the poet accounts womanly perfection—

Her mouth and teeth, by Cupid's bow!
Are letters spelling "kiss,"
And witchingly withdrawn below
Twin worlds of baby bliss,
Her waist, so soft and small, may mean
"O, when will some one come
To make me catch my breath between
His finger and this thumb!".—

Here, again, is a passage truly incredible—

I pressed her hand, by will or chance
I know not, but I saw the rays
Withdrawn, which did till then enhance
Her fairness with its thanks for praise.
I knew my spirit's vague offense
Was patent to the dreaming eye
And heavenly tact of innocence,
And did for fear my fear defy,
And asked her for the next dance. "Yes,"
"No" had not fallen with half the force.

She was fulfilled with gentleness,
And I with measureless remorse;
And, ere I slept, on bended knee
I owned myself, with many a tear,
Unseasonable, disorderly,
And a deranger of love's sphere.
What should I do? in such a wife
Fortune had lavished all her store,
And nothing now seemed left for life,
But to deserve her more and more.—

Enough of the man's imbecilities—now for the passages
in which he soars!

IN LOVE WITH HOME

In love with home, I rose and eyed
The rainy North; but there
The distant hilltop, in its pride,
Adorned the brilliant air;
And as I passed from Tavistock,
The scattered buildings white,
The Church, the golden weathercock,
Were whelmed in happy light . . .
Across a fleeting eastern cloud
The splendid rainbow sprang,
And larks, invisible and loud,
Within its zenith sang.

A STATELY RAINBOW CAME

A stately rainbow came and stood,
When I was young, in High-Hurst Park;
Its bright feet lit the hill and wood
Beyond, and cloud and sward were dark;

And I, who thought the splendour ours
Because the place was, toward it flew,
And there, amidst the glittering showers,
Gazed vainly for the glorious view.
With whatsoever 's lovely, know
It is not ours; stand off to see,
Or beauty's apparition so
Puts on invisibility.

THE HEART'S PROPHECIES

Be not amazed at life; 't is still
The mode of God with his elect
Their hopes exactly to fulfil,
In times and ways they least expect.

HE THAT BUT ONCE

He that but once too nearly hears
The music of forefended spheres,
Is thenceforth lonely, and for all
His days,—like one who treads the Wall
Of China, and, on this hand, sees
Cities and their civilities,
And, on the other, lions.

GOD A TOWER

God is a tower without a stair,
And His perfection, love's despair.
'T is He shall judge me when I die;
He suckles with the hissing fly
The spider; gazes calmly down
Whilst rapine grips the helpless town.
His vast love holds all this and more.
In consternation I adore.

MAGNA EST VERITAS

Here, in this little bay,
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
Where, twice a day,
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
I sit me down.
For want of me the world's course will not fail:
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
The truth is great, and shall prevail
When none cares whether it prevail or not.

FAREWELL AND AU REVOIR

With all my will, but much against my heart,
We two now part. . . .
With faint, averted feet
And many a tear,
In our opposéd paths to persevere . . .
When the one darling of our widowhead,
The nursling Grief,
Is dead,
And no dews blur our eyes
To see the peach-bloom come in evening skies,
Perchance we may,
Where now this night is day,
And even through faith of still averted feet,
Making full circle of our banishment,
Amazéd meet;
The bitter journey to the bourne so sweet
Seasoning the termless feast of our content
With tears of recognition never dry.

THE HANGING

All night fell hammers, shock on shock;
With echoes Newgate's granite clanged:
The scaffold built, at eight o'clock
They brought the man out to be hanged. . . .
Thousands of breasts beat horrid hope;
Thousands of eyeballs, lit with hell,
Burnt one way all, to see the rope
Unslacken as the platform fell. . . .
The dangling corpse hung straight and still.
The show complete, the pleasure past.
The solid masses loosened fast. . . .
A baby strung its doll to a stick;
The mother praised the pretty trick;
Two children caught and hung a cat. . . .
And two, who had disputed places,
Went forth to fight, with murderous faces.



SYDNEY DOBELL

1824-1874

DOBELL was the leader of a school of poetry which ran wild with a succession of strange and unusual metaphors and figures of speech heaped one after the other in hyperbolic profusion. Associated with him in the same group were Alexander Smith, Stanyan Biggs, and others.

With his mock-epic "Firmillian," Professor Aytoun, of "The Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers," pricked their bubble. And, under the appellation of the "Spasmodists," though much of their verse was lovely,—they have hardly survived.

Dobell's mother's father had founded a small religious sect under the name of Primitive Christians.

Dobell, from his birth, was dedicated to a priesthood in it.

Dobell's mother "pondered all the boy's sayings like the mother of Jesus, and his father kept a memorandum of the boy's doings."

"At ten, he had read all of Miss Harriet Martineau's works on political economy, besides having ventured in the Trinitarian controversy."

At the same age he was introduced to a girl child belonging to the Primitive Christian sect—his destined bride.

Later, he carried on his courtship of her, with an open Bible between them.

Married, "for thirty years Dobell's wife never permitted him to leave her side for more than twenty-four hours."

In his early married life "he refused to associate with any families of the neighbourhood who did not belong to

his own sect"—a narrowness of behaviour he got over at one sweep, when, later, at the age of twenty-six, his epic-narrative drama, "The Roman," brought him into an immediate and surprising fame. Then he straightway became a lion of all the salons.

The great Tennyson himself showed the Spasmodists' influence in "Maud."

On meeting Tennyson Dobell exclaimed—"This is the crowning honour of my life."

The tall, swarthy laureate shrank back with,—“Don't talk such damned nonsense.”

Dobell's epic-drama "Balder," though in many respects better than "The Roman" that won him fame, brought down the angry resentment of the public on him, for the arrogant, self-centred egotism of poetic genius he portrayed in it . . . of genius sacrificing for its own development worldly prospects and all intimate domestic ties. . . .

Herein Dobell took unconscious literary revenge on the clinging barnacle qualities of his wife, by portraying the perishing of Balder's wife and child, while the hero-poet went serenely on with his versifying. . . .

In actual life Dobell was chivalrous, gentle, true; "in Christian character and conduct above reproach."

He suffered from rheumatism of the heart, and constant pain was never but the catch of a breath removed.

A promising genius who began greatly, to dwindle soon to the execrable effusions found in his books of lyrics, "England in Time of War."

DEATH IN THE COLISEUM

Behind a hedge of gold

In the elysian field, imperial state

Purpled the ring. High, high, and higher rose

The babel tower of heaped up life, and o'er

This strange, rich arras, rainbow-hued and vast,
The eternal marble, imminent, looked down,
And the cyclopean mass of the huge walls
Frowned from the arches. And before their stern
And monumental grandeur, the up-piled
Mortality was as this hand beside
This rock-hewn dungeon. In the midst stand I,
To play the last red scene of a short life,
Lest Cæsar yawn. You heavens!

While I draw sword

And do the hideous courtesies of war,
My senses, quick with fate, learn all the scene,
And snuff, prescient, on the heavy air
The perfumed death. My foe, a Spartacus
In make and weapon, took with careless scorn
The languid challenge; and with his flat sword
Spurned me to action. So I have beheld
At the unequal pleasure of the winds,
Some poplar giant—tyrant of the plain—
Fall foul of some slim cypress. Point to point,
And blade to bade, and hilt to hilt opposed,
The glittering mazes of the gleaming glaive
Coil and recoil. The waxing strife has shrunk
The earth to standing-ground. The whole rapt being
Sent hot into the hand, spares not one sense
Beyond the sword-arm's circle. Into which
Half-understood, the dreadful seas of clamour
Thunder their surges. So, meseems, a soul
Falling through mid-space hears the passing shout
Of unseen worlds. And now the giant, stung,
Casts off his swordcraft. Striding like a storm,
Uproots me, lightening. See my blade fly up
Like a flung torch; myself into the dust
Hurled like a spear; and the Goliath folding

His untasked arms about his unbreathed breast,
Look up without a flush for the well-known
Signal of doom. Two hundred thousand hands
Gave it. He saw. While the sword rose and fell,
Up from the podium to the beetling height
I turned one dying look to the mute nation
Which—stretching neck and nerve with sanguine strain
To catch the bloody joy—through all its legions
Held such a stifled horrible expectance,
As if the greed of anguish could not spare
The groan a sigh might cover. Round the vast
O'er-peopled hell the terrible haste of death
Took my mad eyes, and, in the indistinct
Wild glance, its serried thousands glared on me
Like one tremendous face.

Consenting sat

That day, all that the world most loved, feared, worshipped.
Sages whose household words, caught up, made proverbs
For far-off nations; grey proconsuls, warriors
Whose mere names stood for victory in all
The tongues of Europe; senators whose title
Ennobled kings; priests of all orders, bishops
Whose heavenly treasure was not lent, as yet,
To earthly usury; great merchants, men
Who dealt in kingdoms; ruddy aruspex,
And pale philosopher, who bent beneath
The keys of wisdom; artists, and whatever
In Rome claimed to be poet; woman, too,
And passing fair,—not that mine eye had note
Of any separate loveliness, or knew,
More than a sense of exquisite relief,
A more or less in hate, an intuition
That in the living mountain which rose round
All was not adamant; a milder mood

In a most terrible destiny. I saw it,
As when upon the fretful parapet
Of some vast cloud that doth engird the west,
Flushed and distempered with the angry hues
Of passionate sunset, oft at eve there shineth
A line of purer lights. All these sat there
Consenting, and with them the purple pride
To which all these bowed down;—and I must die!



DAVID GRAY

1838-1861

DAVID GRAY was born in "one of a group of half a dozen roadside cottages, humble, but with slated roofs, having pleasant patches of garden in front and behind, and wholly occupied by handloom weavers and their families." His father and mother were weavers.

By the door of the Grays' cottage flowed the Luggie or brook on which Gray wrote his long descriptive poem "The Luggie," on which he hoped his fame would rest.

This poetic son of poor weavers had the advantage of a classical education at a parish school. He early became a devourer of all the books he could lay hands on. . . . He learned Greek, Latin, French . . . he began studying for the Kirk, "his imagination . . . much more possessed with the beauties of Greek mythology than with the dogmas of the Calvinistic faith. In place of composing sermons he betook himself to writing verses."

The *Glasgow Citizen* published his first verse, under the pen name of "Will Gurney." . . .

"There was a restless yet timid twinkle of his dark eye, a lack of philosophic balance, a keen and vivid intellect united with a certain nervous incapacity of self-reliance, an irresistible impulse to lofty literary enterprise, shaken with maddening apprehensions of failure."

He was giving day and night to vexatious, fierce study and literary composition, mentally in the scholastic solitude of the anchorite, though with his apprehensive, worrying

mother and his quiet, seldom-speaking father in the same house.

"Solitude," he says, "and an utter want of all physical exercise, are working deplorable ravages in my nervous system. The crow's feet are blackening about my eyes; and I cannot think to face the sunlight."

At the age of twenty-two he had completed a poem of a thousand lines. He entered into "a correspondence" with various men of eminence "as voluminous as that conducted by a minister of state" . . . G. H. Lewes . . . Professor Masson . . . Professor Aytoun . . . the great Disraeli himself. To all of these he sent copies of his long poem—"but no one will read it. They swear they have no time."

David Gray's introductory letter to Bertram Dobell:—

"First: Cleeve Tower (where Dobell resided) I take to be a pleasant place, clothed with ivy, shaded by ancestral beeches; at all events, it is mightily different from my mother's house. Let that be understood distinctly.

Second: I am a poet. Let that also be understood distinctly.

Third: Having at the present time only 8s a week, I wish to improve my position, for the sake of gratifying and assisting a mother whom I love beyond conception of the vulgar.

These, then, are my premises, and the inference takes the form of this request. Will you,—a poet—as far as you can, assist another, a younger poet (of twenty) in a way not to wound his feelings, or hurt his independency of spirit?"

A correspondence ensued "wild and melodramatic on the one side, and full of stern counsel and substantial kindness on the other."

"I tell you that if I live," wrote Gray, "my name and fame shall be second to few of any age," and again "I am

so accustomed to compare my own mental progress with that of such men as Shakespeare, Goethe, and Wordsworth . . . that the dream of my youth will not be fulfilled, if my fame equal not, at least all of these three." But—to show that this boasting and strut was merely compensatory—"I am ashamed of what I wrote you before. I was an actor then."

He proposed to a friend named Sutherland, when he had attained the age of twenty-two "that they should meet on a certain day in Edinburgh, make their way to London on foot, and . . . take the literary world by storm."

Planning "to burst like a meteor on London"—he found himself there.

He would pass the night—his first night in the great city, in Hyde Park. It would be romantic! "Though the month was May, the weather was dark, damp, cloudy."

To Dobell:

"I am in London . . . Westminster Abbey! I was there all day yesterday. If I live I shall be buried there—so help me God!"

He shared "a ghastly, bankrupt attic" with Robert Buchanan, his fellow countryman, and fellow poet. . . .

"The only thing that bothers me is this cold: it is so heavy on my chest I can't get it up."

It was consumption.

Monckton Milnes, who had got him some copying to do allowing him a pound a week for the work,—sent him home to Scotland.

The climate there being too chill and raw for his disease, a few of his letter-made friends of prominence brought him to Torquay, Devonshire. . . .

At the hospital to which he had gone, he had seen so many people in the last ravages of his complaint, that he had straightway fainted at the sight, and, on recovering con-

sciousness, had run away, to rejoin Buchanan in their "bankrupt garret."

Buchanan, looking out at the window, saw "David himself, seated with quite a gay look in an open hansom cab."

He was returned to Scotland, to his tender mother, and puzzled, dour, secretly proud father. . . .

"I am dying," said David, leaning back in his armchair, in the little carpeted bedroom, "I am dying, and I've only two things to regret: that my poem ("The Luggie") is not published, and that I have not seen Italy."

The day before he died, he was overjoyed with the sight of a specimen page of his book that Macmillans had accepted.

His last words—"God is good, and I have faith."

"We are very weary, now David is gone," said the father.

David Gray was carried to his grave on handspokes, in the old Scottish fashion. He was followed by thirty mourners. He was buried in an old graveyard surrounded by a stone wall. Over his grave that went long unmarked stood a solitary ash tree.

"David Gray was a tall young man, slightly but firmly built, and with a stoop at the shoulders. His head was small, fringed with black, curly hair. Want of candour was not his fault, though he seldom looked one in the face; his eyes, however, were large and dark, full of intelligence and humour, harmonizing well with the long, thin nose and nervous lips. The great black eyes and woman's mouth betrayed the creature of impulse; one whose reasoning faculties were small, but whose temperament was like red-hot coal."

"Whom the gods love die young . . . bless the ancient Greeks for that comfort," said David Gray. . . .

"This shall be my epitaph, if I have a gravestone at all,—

"'Twas not a life,

'T was but a piece of childhood thrown away.'"

"My crown is laid in the dust forever."

ONCE MORE, O GOD

Once more, O God, thy wonders take my soul.
A wintry day! the feather-silent snow
Thickens the air with strange delight, and lays
A fairy carpet on the barren lea.
No sun, yet all around that inward light
Which is in purity,—a soft moonshine,
The silvery dimness of a happy dream . . .

hidden clouds

Let fall soft beauty, till each green fir branch
Is plumed and tasseled, till each heather stalk
Is delicately fringed, the sycamores,
Through all their mystical entanglement
Of boughs, are draped with silver.
Out in the snowy dimness, half revealed
Like ghosts in glimpsing moonshine, wildly run
The children in bewildering delight . . .
There is a living glory in the air,—
A glory in the hushed air . . .
Softly—with delicate softness—
slow fall, slow fall,
With indecisive motion eddying down,
The white winged flakes,—calm as the sleep of sound,
Dim as a dream.

O, AUTUMN NIGHTS!

O Autumn nights!
When skies are deeply blue, and the full moon
Soars in voluptuous whiteness, Juno-like,
A passionate splendor; when in the great south
Orion like a frozen skeleton
Hints of his ancient bigness and mailed strength;
And Cassiopea glimmers cold and clear
Upon her throne of seven diamonds!

FROM "IN THE SHADOWS"

If it must be; if it must be, O God!
That I die young, and make no further moans;
That, underneath the unrespective sod,
In unescutcheoned privacy, my bones
Shall crumble soon,—then give me strength to bear
The last convulsive throe of too sweet breath!
I tremble from the edge of life, to dare
The dark and fatal leap, having no faith,
No glorious yearning for the Apocalypse;
But like a child that in the night-time cries
For light, I cry; forgetting the eclipse
Of knowledge and our human destinies.
O peevish and uncertain soul! obey
The law of life in patience till the Day.

THE DAISY-FLOWER IS TO THE SUMMER SWEET

The daisy-flower is to the summer sweet,
Though utterly unknown it live and die;
The spherul harmony were incomplete
Did the dewed lavrock mount no more the sky,
Because her music's linkéd sorcery
Bewitched no mortal heart to heavenly mood.
This is the law of nature, that the deed
Should dedicate its excellence to God,
And in so doing find sufficient meed.
Then why should I make these heart-burning cries
In sickly rhyme with morbid feeling rife,
For fame and temporal felicities?
Forgetting that in holy labour lies
The scholarship severe of human life.

OCTOBER'S GOLD IS DIM

October's gold is dim,—the forests rot,
The weary rain falls ceaseless, while the day
Is wrapped in damp. In mire of village way
The hedgerow leaves are stamped, and, all forgot,
The broodless nest sits visible on the thorn.
Autumn, among her drooping marigolds,
Weeps all her garnered sheaves, and empty folds,
And dripping orchards,—plundered and forlorn.
The season is a dead one, and I die!
No more, no more for me the spring shall make
A resurrection in the earth, and take
The death from out her heart—O God, I die!
The cold throat-mist creeps nearer, till I breathe
Corruption. Drop, stark night, upon my death!

SWEETLY, MY MOTHER!

Sweetly, my mother! Go not yet away,—
I have not told my story. O, not yet,
With the fair past before me, can I lay
My cheek upon the pillow to forget.
O sweet, fair past, my twenty years of youth
Thus thrown away, not fashioning a man;
But fashioning a memory forsooth!
More feminine than follower of Pan.
O God! let me not die for years and more!
Fulfill Thyself, and I will live then surely
Longer than a mere childhood. Now, heartsore,
Weary, with being weary,—weary purely.
In dying, mother, I can find no pleasure
Except in being near thee without measure.



SELWYN IMAGE

A MAY MORNING

Amid the tender boughs of green
The young sun laughs for joy: between
Slim, silver, mottled stems of birch
A throng of saffron butterflies,
New-grown to greet the morning, search
Where the pale blue-bell's honey lies.

How still they settle, softly float,
To music of the blackbird's note!
To undertone of early bees,
That hum from flower to flower, and quaff
New nectar! Insects, blossoms, trees,
Alert to greet the sun-god's laugh!

DE PROFUNDIS

Because the world is very stern;
Because the work is very long;
Because the foes are very strong,
Whatever side I turn:

Because my courage ebbs away;
Because my spirit's eyes are dim;
Because with failures to the brim
My cup fills day by day:

Because forbidden ways invite;
 Because the smile of sin is sweet;
 Because so readily run my feet
Towards paths that close in night:
Because God's face I long to see;
 Because God's Image stamps me yet:
 Oh! by thy Passion, Christ, forget
Me not, who fly to thee!



VICTOR PLARR

THE HAUNTING DREAM

Last night a melancholy dream
Pursued me down the gulfs of sleep,
Like some great bird that flits a-gleam
In a ship's wake on the lone deep.
One of those dreams it was so sweet,
And subtly sad, that when I woke,
And rose, and went into the street,
I dreamt although I moved and spoke:
I dreamt although my hands and brain
Were busy in the jarring noon;
I dreamt till night came round again,
And now I dream, watching the moon.
Oh for the joy that might have been,
Oh for the joy that shall not be,
And that which thou hast never seen,
And that which thou mayst never see!

EPITAPHIUM CITHARISTRIAE

Stand not uttering sedately
Trite oblivious praise above her!
Rather say you saw her lately
Lightly kissing her last lover.

Whisper not "there is a reason
Why we bring her no white blossom."
Since the snowy bloom 's in season
Strew it on her sleeping bosom!

Oh, for it would be a pity
To o'erpraise her or to flout her.
She was wild, and sweet, and witty—
Let 's not say dull things about her.



THEOPHILE MARZIALS

I dreamed I was in Sicily,
All sky and hills and flowers;
We sat under a citron tree
And courted, hours and hours.

I woke by dunes of a bleak north-land,
Along a lonely grave in the snow;
The salt wind rattled the ivy-band
I 'd tied at the headstone long ago.



SIR LEWIS MORRIS

1833-1907

His verse "the milk of Tennyson watered at the pump of Martin Tupper."

"Tennyson des Enfants."

MUSIC

What is this strange new life, this finer sense,
This passionate exaltation, which doth force
Like the weird Indian juggler, instantly
My soul from seed to flower, from flower to fruit,
Which lifts me out of self, and bids me tread
Without a word, on dim aerial peaks,
Impossible else, and rise to glorious thoughts,
High hopes, and inarticulate fantasies
Denied to soberer hours? No spoken thought
Of bard or seer can mount so far, or lift
The soul to such transcendent heights, or work
So strong a spell of love, or roll along
Such passionate, troubled depths. No painter's hand
Can limn so clear, the luminous air serene
Of paradise, the halcyon deep, the calm
Of the eternal snows, the eddy and whirl
Of mortal fight, the furious flood let loose
From interlacing hills, the storm which glooms
Over the shoreless sea. Our speech too oft
Is bound and fettered by such narrow laws
That words which to one nation pierce the heart,

To another are but senseless sounds and weak
And powerless to stir the soul; but this
Speaks with a common tongue, uses a speech
Which all may understand. . . .

STRONG SOULS

Strong souls within the present live;
The future veiled,—the past forgot:
Grasping what is, with hands of steel,
They bend what shall be, to their will;
And, blind alike to doubt and dread,
The end, for which they are, fulfil!

"THE BRONZE TREASURY" HAS BEEN DESIGNED BY
ROBERT S. JOSEPHY; THE PRINTING AND BINDING
EXECUTED UNDER HIS SUPERVISION BY J. J. LITTLE
AND IVES CO., NEW YORK, IN OCTOBER MCMXXVII.

THE FIRST EDITION CONSISTS OF TWO THOUSAND
NUMBERED COPIES, OF WHICH

THIS IS NUMBER

190

MILLS COLLEGE LIBRARY

DO NOT WRITE ON THE LAST DATE

54050

MILLS COLLEGE LIBRARY

BNF The bronze treasury; an anthology
821.08 K32b Kemp, Harry, 1883-



3 3086 00100 7178

Mills College Library
Withdrawn

821.08

54050

K32b

